

*Rambles in
Autograph Land*

Adrian N. Joline

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RAMBLES IN AUTOGRAPH LAND

BY

ADRIAN H. JOLINE

ILLUSTRATED WITH
MANY PORTRAITS
AND FACSIMILES

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS

NEW YORK AND LONDON

The Knickerbocker Press

MCMXIII

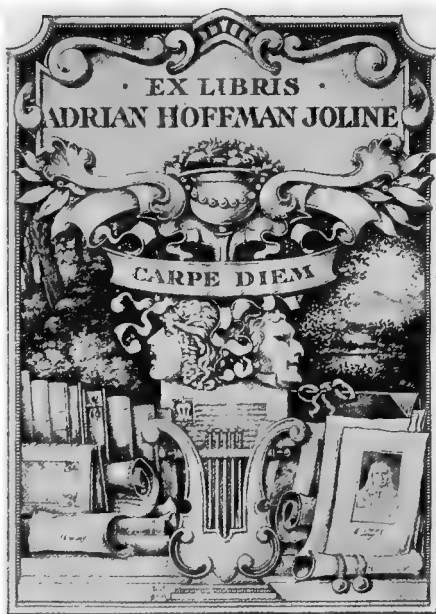
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BY
MARY E. L. JOLINE

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

FOREWORD

To most men an avocation is merely what the word, in its strict significance, implies—a relaxation from the serious business of life. But Adrian Hoffman Joline made the practice and pursuit of literature a very real thing. He loved books and bookmen with a genuine passion, and he wrote about them with a sympathetic insight that was as far removed from dilettanteism as from pedantry. Now “collecting” is too often a mere manifestation of the selfish instinct for exclusive possession; with Joline it was a joy so vital and so generous that he could not rest until he had shared it with his fellow-men. It was the human document that interested him, and the rare edition, the priceless autograph, were only the outward and visible signs of an underlying spirit. A book or a manuscript meant to him personality, and he

possessed the happy faculty of both discerning it for himself, and of making it visible to others. His was the blessed sense of humour, which, in the highest analysis, is only another name for understanding. He laughed at foibles, but he did not sit in judgment upon faults. He was a keen critic, but he was content to sift the wheat from the chaff without smothering his readers in the dust of the controversial threshing-floor. He talked with his books and autographs rather than about them; and any interested bystander, who cared to join the friendly circle, was sure of a welcome; the only password was sympathy, the only qualification, a measure of the host's own kindly tolerance. Overburdened with the many cares of his busy professional life, he yet made time and occasion for communion with the immortals, and in their noble company he found inexhaustible refreshment for both body and mind. And so, when he wrote about his books, and their makers, the dominant note was that of an affectionate gratitude for benefits bestowed, for happiness conferred. His own literary work was a ministry of un-

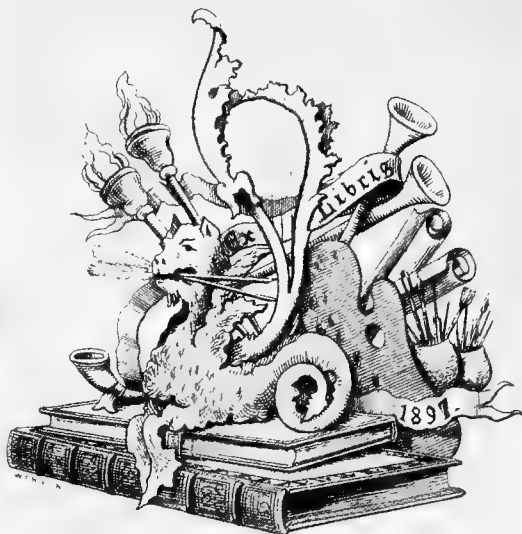


Bookplate of Adrian Hoffman Joline, engraved by J. W. Spenceley

pretending love. The very simplicity of his titles—*Meditations of an Autograph Collector*, *Diversions of a Book Lover*, *Peapack Papers*, etc.—bears witness to the unaffected modesty with which he regarded his excursions along the highway of letters. His was a pure offering, and one that carried with it its own enduring reward.

The manuscript of *Rambles in Autograph Land* was found among Mr. Joline's posthumous papers, and he had spent the greater part of the last summer of his life in making it ready for the press. A certain amount of revision and rearrangement of material remained to be done, and this task has been accomplished by Mrs. Joline, the first and always the chief sharer of her husband's literary confidences.

VAN TASSEL SUTPHEN.



Adrian Hoffman Joline.

Bookplate of Adrian Hoffman Joline, engraved by
W. F. Hopson

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Rambles in Autograph Land

CHAPTER I

UNREAD BOOKS

Unread Books—Books Commercially Valueless—Unappreciated Authors—Book Preferences—Why Collect Autographs?—Popular Errors about Them—Mr. Madan's Deliverance—William Carew Hazlitt—Signature-gathering—Some English Collectors—Upcott—Dawson Turner—Goldwin Smith's Sneer—An English Autograph King—Newspaper Wisdom about Autographs.

Lector benevole! for so
They used to call you years ago—
I can't pretend to make you read
The pages that to this succeed.

THUS does a delightful lover of books begin the prologue of *De Libris*. I have misgivings about inducing the *lector benevolus* to read even this page, although it is graced and embellished by the words of Austin Dobson.

Many books are talked about and seldom read, and many are both read and talked about—but there is another sort which no one ever speaks of and no one ever reads. A book about autographs usually belongs to the last mentioned variety; perhaps it would not have been so a century or more ago, when there were those who actually bought and read the dreary “Essays on Taste,” about which the devoted bibliophile Robert Southey said: “There are still readers who have never read an Essay on Taste—and if they take my advice they never will; for they can no more improve their taste by so doing than they could improve their appetite or their digestion by studying a cookery book.” One would think that even autographic gossip would be more interesting.

Only a few months ago I was told by the accomplished manager of a famous publishing house in New York that my writings probably had little commercial value. I did not find myself prepared to dispute an authoritative judgment coming from the business side of the publishing office. But when one reflects about some of the dreadful things which

appear to have "commercial value," such an assurance is not so devoid of flattery as it might seem to be at first blush. If one is inclined to take optimistic views of matters in general, there is cause of self-gratulation in being, like Katisha in the *Mikado*, "an acquired taste." Any one who deliberately writes for the limited class known as "autograph collectors," and who expects to be enrolled in the closing pages of *The Bookman* as a "best seller" is doomed to disappointment. He might better produce a volume on the Habits and Customs of Earthworms or a treatise on the Law of Contingent Remainders. If there be a distinction in writing for the few, he must be content with that, and with the consoling thought that it is like sitting down to dine with a small band of "choice spirits," instead of going through the form of feasting at a Waldorf-Astoria banquet where a thousand men feed noisily to the accompaniment of an orchestra and listen to the laboured discourses, long drawn out, with which the diners are regaled towards the hour of midnight. It is not to be wondered at that autographic dis-

quisitions should be little esteemed; those who like autographs generally know so much about the subject that they do not demand further enlightenment, and those who do not care for them are simply bored by a book about them; wherefore I have written this book.

Writers whose works are unread usually find a dubious solace in the experience of George Meredith, whose "long and noble struggle against the inattention of the public," as Mr. Gosse calls it, is known to most students of modern literature. In 1883 he wrote to some one who was begging for a copy of *Vittoria*: "The effect of public disfavour has been to make me indifferent to my works after they have gone through their course of castigation." Mr. Gosse alludes to the assertion that "the movement in favour of him began in America," and adds, "if so, more praise to American readers." But Meredith devoted himself chiefly to fiction and it must be a low order of fiction which does not get itself read by somebody at some time; moreover there are not many Merediths. Still, notwithstanding his present fame, it cannot

be said that in general popularity he ranks with Arnold Bennett or with the author of *The Rosary*. Recently an intelligent woman asked me if he was the man who wrote *Lucile*, which reminded me of the personage I met in Washington who alluded to Henry James as "that two horsemen fellow."

There is not much dispute about the fact that the ordinary reader prefers to read what repeats and embodies his own beliefs and opinions, and not the opposing views of the writer. Ruskin thought that a reader in laying down a book was apt to say, "How good that is—that is exactly what I think," and Mr. Benson appears to be satisfied that Ruskin was right and that the best authors are not those who tell us what they themselves believe, but those who show us what *we* believe. We love to find, expressed in print and by aptly chosen words, what has been lying, formless perhaps, in our own minds, and we are pleased with the sensible author who agrees with us in our opinions. Multitudes resemble good Joe Gargery and are enraptured when they *do* come upon a "J-O-Joe," exclaiming,

“there at last is a J-O-Joe” and becoming aware of “how interesting reading is.” There are many reasons why this contribution to literature must, in the nature of things, find few readers; still it will belong to a class which every one likes to belong to—the majority. Some people pretend that they prefer to be in the minority, and occasionally I affect that pose myself, but to be wholly candid, it is not altogether a comfortable one. It is a means now and then of making an obscure person conspicuous. I knew a respectable lady who, when asked that old question, “Which is heavier, a pound of feathers or a pound of lead?” answered with a sniff of conscious superiority, “*Some* people would say ‘a pound of lead,’ but *I* say ‘a pound of feathers.’” I have often reflected on the disappointment of that solitary elector who cast the single vote against James Monroe for the Presidency in 1820; no one seems to remember his name,¹ although a delver in the chronicles of that time may no doubt discover it easily; but his hope of immortality proved to be delusive.

¹ I believe it was William Plumer; but who remembers Plumer?

There is a certain dignity about a book which has been read by only two or three adventurous beings; it becomes an aristocratic sort of book, unsullied by vulgar popularity, but like many aristocrats, not overburdened with income. Naturally, books which boast no readers are not particularly lucrative, unless we except law treatises, which are said to "pay," because every public law-library must have a copy and the prices are tremendous. Views differ about the matter of writing for pecuniary profit. Montaigne declared that "to pretend to literature for the sake of gain was a meanness unworthy the grace and favour of the muses," which is consoling to the unappreciated. On the other hand, Doctor Johnson said that "no man but a blockhead ever wrote except for money." This judgment has been successfully assailed by Professor Walter Raleigh, but I accept it. What of it? Johnson wrote much but gained little money. It is better to be a blockhead and write for one's own amusement than it is to be a wise man and to write only for money—and not get the money.

8 **Rambles in Autograph Land**

Some years ago I read in an English periodical the sage and indulgent remark that "the love of collecting autographs, if it has sometimes been pursued without much taste or meaning, has never sunk to the rank of a mere mania, like the tulip mania of the seventeenth and the postage-stamp mania of the nineteenth century." This is indeed gracious and condescending. The profound observer leaves us uncertain whether the "love" or the "collecting" is "pursued"; but we should be grateful for the patronising utterance. Why do we collect autographs? Almost every collector can give peculiar and specific reasons; I could give a number, but I will refrain from advancing more than one. A certain alleged reason is a favourite with the uninitiated and it is fictitious. Southey touched upon it, when, about the year 1814, he wrote:

Those who know that the word physiognomy is not derived from phiz, and infer from that knowledge that the science is not confined to the visage alone, have extended it to handwriting, also, and hence it has become fashionable in this age of collectors to collect the autographs of remarkable persons.

I myself have never encountered an autograph collector who cared a denarius about a comparison of handwritings, or who accumulated his treasures in order to study character from them. The head-hunter of Borneo does not gather his specimens for the purpose of studying phrenology. The main reason why we collect is—that we enjoy it.

The English periodical says:

There is always a pleasure in contemplating the handwriting of persons whom you respect or admire, and the mind is led insensibly to associate certain characteristics with handwriting from reading those same characteristics in lives or faces.

For my part, I am convinced that there is very little revelation of character in handwriting. Our English friend calls attention to the “neat hand of Rogers,” as “calm, laboured, and regular as his poetry,” and the “scraggy, sprawling hand” of Byron, “as uneven, dashing, and unlovely as his life;” the fact being that Rogers was brought up to business and Byron was never brought up at all. Indeed, in his very next paragraph, the periodical man admits that “there are many kinds

of handwriting which do not accord with what we know of their authors." There are so many influences which affect a man's penmanship—the quality of the paper, ink, and pen, the circumstances under which he writes, early environment, whether he is hurried or not, the occasion for writing.¹ A man often imitates in boyhood the chirography of his father or of some admired relative, and never changes the style in any material respect. The feminine quality of Mr. Cleveland's handwriting furnishes no guide to the study of his nature. Murat's was without any ostentation; Robespierre's was small and lady-like; Macaulay's was unformed, straggling, and slovenly. John Hancock signed the Declaration in a big bold way but was not famous for bravery; Stephen Hopkins's hand trembled as he wrote, not from fright but from physical infirmity. Such illustrations might be multiplied almost indefinitely.

The queer observations about autograph

¹ Disraeli was right when he wrote to an applicant for an autograph: "I have no great faith in the theory of judging of character from handwriting. My autograph depends upon my pen, which is at present a very bad one."

collecting made by men of education and of a literary disposition are often irritating and occasionally amusing. Mr. Falconer Madan, whose gravity is appalling, produced a book some years ago called *Books in Manuscript* in which he imparted to us this gratifying information:

The collection of autograph letters has a great and natural attraction for many persons. Instead of a single author's works in manuscript, the collector of autographs obtains specimens of the handwriting of any number of celebrities who may belong to a period or nation or class in which he is specially interested, or may represent general fame. For him all who can write are authors, and his ambition is to obtain an *a. l. s.* (autograph letter signed) or at least a signature of all who come within the scope of his designs.

This is not what we should expect from a personage who admits on his title-page that he is an M. A., a Fellow of Brazenose College, and Lecturer on Mediæval Paleography in the University of Oxford. I trust that he knows more about mediæval paleography than he seems to know about autograph collectors; perhaps his researches in that fruitful field were too laborious to permit him to learn

natures, manuscripts, letters, or historical documents—is as senseless as the collecting of paper-dolls or of postcards. As Doctor George Birkbeck Hill says: "To many people the word 'autograph' means nothing more than the signature of a man more or less eminent. A collection of autographs they regard as only a collection of signatures." Usually this mental attitude is the result of defective education or of imperfect information, and one cannot help feeling compassion for the victims, who are themselves innocent enough in their folly and suffer from ignorance for which personally they are little to blame.

Scott and Davey, in their preternaturally solemn *Guide to the Collector*, are very serious about this subject. They say:

The beginner must, however, cast aside many erroneous ideas concerning autographs, some of which are very common and have been long sanctioned by fashion. In the first place, he must learn to regard as *valueless* mere signatures of individuals cut out from letters or documents; for with few and rare exceptions, such are never admitted into the portfolio of the collector.

Signatures not "cut out" but written by request may be a little better, but the principle is the same.

When the world has once made up its mind to be wrong on any subject, particularly one which is merely literary or æsthetic, no amount of written or printed remonstrance will convince it of its error. You may now and then effect a temporary lodgment in the mind of some isolated individual, but the people who think about it at all—there are not many—will struggle through life under the delusion that "signatures" are the be-all and end-all of the collector's existence. I know an eminent American collector whose feelings have been so wrought upon by this popular misapprehension that he would never attempt to make up a set of "The Signers" because he could not secure anything but a signature in the case of Thomas Lynch, Jr.

Ours is a new civilisation in this country and the material things appeal most to the multitude. It may be a more beneficial and progressive civilisation than that of England, but we do not find there such conspicu-

ous manifestations of defective culture. For many reasons England is not, at least for an American, so pleasant a land to live in as ours, but one finds there more tolerance for the autograph lover than in this land of "triumphant democracy."

An excellent example of an English collector was William Upcott, who collected many things, but gained less fame for his coins and prints than for his autograph letters and documents. He called his house, No. 102 Upper Street, Islington, "Autograph Cottage," and when he died in 1845 he left thirty-two thousand specimens, comprising papers by which, says Doctor Scott, "the history of a large portion of Europe during several centuries might have been illuminated." This collection was sold in 1846 (not in 1836, as Scott says) and most of it was acquired by the British Museum. There was also Dawson Turner, the botanist, who not only had over forty thousand letters, besides illuminated manuscripts and important documents which were sold in 1859, but one hundred and fifty volumes of manuscripts and letters which

were disposed of in 1853, five years before his death.

In the "collection" there is a letter of Turner's, concerning the recent death of Upcott and enclosing a drawing by Turner's daughter:

DEAR SIR—

When a man has little to give he must be allowed to act wisely in following the old Latin Proverb & by giving that little quickly endeavour to stamp it with an artificial value to which it would intrinsically have no claim. With this feeling I lose no time in sending you my daughter's drawing of our late friend & apprehending you may possibly have his catalogue or some other of his publications in which you may like to insert it, I add a duplicate copy. For myself, the dressing up of my books with portraits & autographs has always been a pleasure to me. I have thought I could read a volume with more satisfaction & feel myself to a certain degree personally acquainted with the author, if I knew how he looked & what sort of a hand he wrote. In this particular therefore I trust I may have the opportunity of amusing you when you favour me with a visit here, which you must do, now Yarmouth is brought within 7 hours of London. But three years ago, & the journey occupied 18. I can show you nothing like the collection that you & I have seen at Islington—perhaps not one third in point of quantity & still less in relation to rarity & curiosity; but I have the vanity to

believe I can very much make amends by superiority of arrangement, without which all other considerations lose half their worth. Of poor Upcott I suppose we shall now hear little or nothing further till his shelves & cupboards & boxes are emptied & Sotheby's or Evans' or Fletcher's catalogue gives us some notion of their contents. I say "some notion," & I use the phrase advisedly; for to estimate them aright required that singular knowledge & power of words which I never knew any other person possess in an equal degree. Were I to be called to Town, I wd certainly go to his late residence, where I hope I might see his cousin; & she, I am persuaded, would be glad to speak to me in a manner the most confidential. Her bearing, as far as I have seen, was always respectable & respectful: & I shd be glad to find she was able to establish by relationship any right to what he has left behind him. The testamentary disposition in favour of Miss Berry I presume is not invested with the forms requisite to make it legal.

I am, my dear sir, your much obliged & faithful
DAWSON TURNER.

YARMOUTH, 6 Octr., 1845.

In thinking, with wonder, about these enormous collections of Englishmen, we Americans must remember that there must have been many included in them which would not arouse our cupidity. A writer in a magazine forty years ago says that as a collector he had "carefully examined whole volumes of Up-

cottian Dukes, Marquises, Earls, and Lords, arranged in perfect autographic order, without finding a specimen worthy of a place in an American collection, and had seen without emotion such volumes knocked down for little more than the price of the binding." Such uninteresting accumulations are as unattractive to us as a gathering of the autographs of American Congressmen would be to an Englishman—and I can scarcely conceive of anything more unattractive than that.

Doctor Raffles of Liverpool was another famous amateur, who had the first draft of the hymn "From Greenland's icy mountains," and a complete set of the Signers of the Declaration of Independence, as well as Burke's notes for his speech against Warren Hastings. Mr. Alfred Morrison's collection almost defies description. The sales catalogues of the Sotheby house, issued at intervals, reveal the existence of many others who add dignity to the pursuit. We have been increasing in numbers in the United States, although prices have grown to such an extent that only a man of wealth can afford to buy the best, and com-

paratively few of our men of wealth have the time or the disposition to become collectors of autographs.

But even Englishmen, and distinguished ones at that, sometimes feel it incumbent upon them to cast opprobrium upon the autograph lover. Goldwin Smith, for example, who was a sort of self-exiled Englishman, in his sketch of "Social Life in London," refers to Richard Monckton Milnes as "a great and most successful collector of autographs," but cannot refrain from adding, "To a collector of autographs everything is moral." This silly generalisation is vouchsafed to us merely because Lord Houghton did not answer an inquiry as to how he obtained a certain paper signed by General Grant in his cadet days. The question was impudent, and Smith might as well have asked Milnes how he obtained the watch in his pocket. It was none of Smith's business, and the omission to reply to his insolent query was wholly justifiable. Smith's absurd conclusion that the paper must have been obtained by discreditable means is a characteristic manifesta-

tion of one of those qualities which rendered it advisable for the person who announced it to become a resident of Canada. It is as gratuitously false as it would be to say that all ex-professors of Oxford are cads. Mr. Smith simply thought it smart to bestow a kick on autograph collectors; Milnes was dead and there was therefore no opportunity for a rejoinder.

I fear that autograph lovers are often misjudged because there are a few who pretend to belong to their ranks, mere impostors, who bring discredit upon the true disciples of the cult: and unluckily, these reprobates appear to gain easiest access to the columns of the press, as charlatans, political or otherwise, frequently do. Take for example this paragraph which I found some time ago in a reputable newspaper of New York, which contains more abomination than I ever saw compressed in so small a space.

If a certain individual in London, who styles himself "the autograph king of England" ever wants to become an international forger, he has a fine stock in trade to start with. Mr. B—— proudly boasts that

he has five thousand signatures of great and near-great people, the list including the Queen of Roumania, the Pope, ex-President Roosevelt, Admiral Togo, Mr. Asquith, Mr. Balfour, Lord Roberts, Sir Hector Macdonald, Sir Henry Irving, Dr. Jameson, and Lord Salisbury. "One of the features of my collection," he says, "is that no influence has been used to obtain a single autograph. Every one has been gained by perseverance and the originality of my request."

An "autograph king" with five thousand *signatures!* Heaven save the mark! A money king with five thousand brass farthings would be a Croesus beside him. Words fail to describe the appalling insignificance of a "collector" with a lot of signatures obtained by request, whether original or not. For a few pennies he could procure from a dealer signatures of every one of the people whose names he gives. One well-known dealer in New York advertises that he will send fifty good ones for a dollar. The declaration that "one of the features" of this remarkable mass of rubbish is that "no influence was used" to obtain any signature, reminds us of M. Prud' homme, who, when a cane—I think it was a cane—was given to him by some ad-

mirers, began his speech of thanks by saying: "This cane is the proudest day of my life." The mere fact that the royal B—— "proudly boasts" is enough to betray his lack of genuineness. The true collector never boasts; he may chuckle mildly now and then over some unusual letter or document, but he is far too dignified to "boast," which is vulgar. Yet there are credulous beings who read these rigmaroles in their morning paper, and upon them form their erroneous opinions of the autograph collector. I pass by without comment the absurd suggestion about "an international forger." It is too cheap and common a slur to deserve notice. Our newspaper people have grown so fond of spelling crime out of everything that they would detect it in a Convocation of Bishops. Where autographs are concerned they do not exhibit their customary wisdom; that is not to be wondered at, for they have so many other and more weighty and criminal matters to consider that the subject of autographs must appear to them to be trifling. Charged as they are with the responsibility of regulating the

affairs of the nation and the morals of the people, they cannot waste much effort on autographs.

The daily newspaper is a veritable Warwick and is constantly setting up a new autograph king, usually a gentleman with an album of signatures. Since the coronation of B——, another has been elevated to the throne, which is growing overcrowded. On July 1, 1912, a clever New York journal devoted nearly a column to the royal career of one L—— B—— of Berlin, "the most indefatigable autograph collector in the world"; all newspaper heroes are "the most"—whatever it may be—in the world. If a man dies in what used to be known as "the Annexed District," the obituary notice proclaims that he was "the oldest scissors-grinder" or "most extensive cat's-meat purveyor" in the Bronx. We are informed that the royal German is "coming to London," having "spent over \$50,000 on his hobby" and "travelled all over the world to secure desired signatures"—in the Desert of Sahara and the rubber country of the Amazon perhaps. The fruits of his gigantic

labours are all contained in a "little fat volume bound in red cloth." We are further told that "Prince Roland Bonaparte has called L—— B—— the king of autograph collectors." The habit of making dubious kings seems to run in the Bonaparte family. L—— B—— need not have paid so much for his crown; for \$50,000 he should have been able to procure at least five hundred thousand signatures, and fifty thousand ought to be enough to make a newspaper autograph king of him.

In one of the best morning journals of New York I found recently—in the editorial department too—this deliverance:

At a current sale of autograph letters and manuscripts in London the prices range pretty low—a lot of letters, for instance, from Queen Victoria, the Duchess of Gloucester, the Duke of Wellington, Bulwer Lytton, Charles Dickens, John Ruskin, and Mrs. Siddons, with signatures of Prince Albert and Sir Walter Scott, went for fifty dollars.

On the other hand, at a Paris auction, the jewelled ornaments and coffee cup stands of the Sultan Abdul Hamid were contended for with much spirit and long purses. Can it be that the interest in polite letters is being slowly but surely submerged in the rising tide of interest in jewels representing cold cash? You can't wear an autograph letter as a pendant; the MS.

of *Vanity Fair* or *Paradise Lost*, even, would n't look like a sable coat. Emeralds and rubies and pearls, these are the enduring treasures sought by the modern "collector."

I question the writer's facts. As to the sale of "a lot of letters" at the price mentioned, I think the writer must have been grossly misinformed, or he mixed up pounds and dollars. Granting that there was a sale of autographs at that price,—which is not likely, in London, where in the last year or two prices have soared unreasonably,—they could not have been real *letters*. "Letters" of Queen Victoria, Charles Dickens, Mrs. Siddons, and the Duke of Wellington are not put up for sale, together, in one lot. A letter of Mrs. Siddons would bring at least half the amount mentioned. I was obliged to pay five guineas for this one of hers written to George Hardinge, the lawyer and author. It is not dated.

MY DEAR MR. HARDINGE, I [saw] Lord Fosbrook again last night and he seem'd to say that you shod have a box let who wd go without. I will certainly use all my interest with Mr. Linley but I fear I have no great influence there—had I not been distracted with ten thousand different things I wou'd have sent my sweet Mrs. H. a million of thanks for her kind

letter but I am stark mad and my soul grows sick with trouble. I have found an opportunity however of getting thro' almost all your defence of Lord Camelford. I never was more interested in my life but what gratification can all that a poor ignorant woman can say in your praise give you who must have receiv'd the highest encomiums from the good, the wise and the great, none of whom however can in good will excell yr S. Sid.

Give my love to my dear Mrs. H. and God bless you both.

The lady was theatrically profuse in superlatives but sparing in her signature, which seems inappropriate to the Tragic Muse.

If the things which "fetched" fifty dollars were "letters" they must have been in amazingly bad condition, of no intrinsic interest, or mere "album specimens" which are of small account. They may have been of doubtful authenticity. But I am inclined to adopt my original hypothesis; in all probability the tale is best described by the "short, ugly word" which has become almost sacred to Presidential or ex-Presidential uses. It was evidently "lugged in" as a text for the journalistically profound reflections contained in the closing portion of the paragraph.

CHAPTER II

FACSIMILES AND FORGERIES

The Price Question—Apologies of Collectors—Facsimiles and Forgeries—The Milton Receipts—How do you Know it is Genuine?—George Birkbeck Hill's Forged Washington—The Case of Robert Spring—Vrain-Lucas—Sir David Brewster's letter on Newton.

THE reference to prices leads me to confess that there is one occasional weakness of a collector which gives me a little twinge of pain; his disposition to dwell upon the cost and the market value of the letter or manuscript. In my humble judgment, it takes away much of the charm and sentiment of collecting and destroys true enjoyment. Others may not so regard it; they may consider that the payment of a large sum for a choice specimen is a badge of distinction, and the fact that some one else is willing to give for it a larger sum furnishes a measure of its rarity

and value; they feel like the millionaire who lavishes thousands in the purchase of a Mazarin Bible, and has the glory of owning one of the most expensive books in the world. More commonly, however, the pride is in the thought of having made a shrewd bargain, for collectors are more inclined to boast of having paid a small price for a valuable autograph than of having paid a large one. But there is an element of the sordid about it all, and while I have no intention of parading my egotism or of bragging about my own transcendent virtues, I assert that I seldom keep any record of what a letter or a manuscript cost me, and have no idea what it will "fetch" at the auction sale, which will concern my executors far more than it will ever concern me. Naturally, it is otherwise with those who are engaged in the business of dealing in autographs. To these, of course, autographs are articles of commerce, but it is strange to me that a professed lover of them can so look upon them. I referred to the money value of the bogus "king's" signatures merely to show how easy it is to make a "collection" of them

without self-humiliation and the pestering of notable personages.

According to my way of thinking, comparison and discussion of prices is one of the drawbacks to the enjoyment of the genial Mr. Broadley's *Chats on Autographs*. Few of us care much about other people's bargains; and after a little time the old prices afford no criterion for estimating market values. An experience of over twenty-five years has convinced me that it is impossible to find any standard in such matters. Many amateurs have puzzled me sorely by submitting letters and asking me to tell them what they ought to bring. Of course, the answer must be a mere approximation. One may safely say that an A. L. S. of George is worth more than an L. S. of Booker T., and a Thomas Lynch, Jr., more than a Robert Morris. But as a rule, the price will depend a good deal on the anxiety of the buyer or the necessity of the seller.

I do not know why I should follow the example of almost all those who write about autographs—offer excuses for the collector and confess some of his failings. Let the poor

creature who attacks us formulate his charges and produce his evidence before we put in our defence. After all, who is to decide the case? Certainly not the prosecutors, and no one expects to convince *them*. To the multitude, who know little and care less about the whole subject, there is not much use in offering argument. I suppose that we who are of the brotherhood indulge in this sort of mingled apology, protest, and lamentation merely for one another's comfort and consolation. If people generally will not tell us what fine fellows we are, we can at least tell one another so, and gain thereby about as much profit as we would if we had won over the populace. There is, however, one of our number who preserves a cheery optimism. Mr. Broadley, in his *Chats on Autographs*, is never on the defensive; he glories in his "fad" and rides triumphantly over the prostrate bodies of those who dare meet his conquering lance.

One danger we are all of us liable to run, but not so often as one might suppose, and even that is to be feared only by the careless or the inexperienced. I mean the danger of

being deceived by facsimiles and by cleverly executed forgeries. As to facsimiles, the erudite collector may laugh, saying that only a mere tyro can be misled by one. I have been "collecting" for a quarter of a century and I flattered myself that I was no longer a novice. Yet it was only a year ago that, on casually examining a copy of the Letters of Lord Chesterfield in my library, I found, carefully pasted on a cut flyleaf in the very beginning of the book, a letter in the unmistakable chirography of the noble Lord. As the cutting and the pasting looked like my own work, and as the letter itself had the appearance of an original, I thought that I must have inserted it at a time when I was afflicted with the mania of adding autographs to my books, although I wondered that I had been guilty of thus misusing so valuable a letter. I decided to remove it from the volume, but on examining the table of contents I was led to the painful discovery that my letter was only a facsimile and one of the illustrations of the very book I was handling. If I had been *buying* the letter I should have detected its

true character by feeling the surface, especially the address, where the reproduction of the broken seal was palpably facsimile work; at least I flatter myself to that extent. It was a humiliating experience.

Quite frequently an innocent purchaser is misled by facsimiles given by old magazines, for they have a deceptive appearance of age and are generally very well executed. Doctor Scott furnishes an example in the famous Milton receipts, one for £5, on account of the copyright of *Paradise Lost*, and one by Milton's widow for £8 in payment for her interest in that copyright. It seems that facsimiles were published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for July, 1822. What purported to be the Milton receipt was found in the manuscripts of Mr. Dawson Turner, and was sold by Puttick & Simpson in 1859, for the respectable sum of £46 1s., to an American. It had the hallmark afforded by the fact that it came from a famous collection. Doctor Scott leaves us in doubt, however, about the true genesis of this spurious paper. He says, at first, that the original was "borrowed from Sir

Thomas Cullum" by Mr. Turner and that a copy was traced from this original by Turner's sister, a thing, he adds, which "any amateur would naturally have done"; but I question the truth of that assertion. A page further on he refers to the magazine facsimiles and observes that "by comparing them with the Dawson Turner tracings, it was at once evident that they were the sources whence Mr. Turner had taken his copies." If so, what becomes of the tale about borrowing the originals from Sir Thomas Cullum? However, either story contains a warning. Whenever I discover a facsimile or a copy among my humble belongings, I put a mark upon it so that, however unimportant it may be, in comparison with a Milton document, no one can be mistaken about it.

Considering the disposition of innocent buyers to accept copies as originals, I think that all facsimiles, which are at all likely to be deceptive, should be branded in some such way as publishers are accustomed to employ now to deface the copies of prints given in their portrait catalogues.

Mr. Broadley has an interesting chapter on forgeries and Scott devotes many pages to that subject. The non-collector is fond of asking, "How do you know it is genuine?" There are many answers to that question, so many that I shall not attempt to give them here. One may be reasonably sure that the danger of forgery is ordinarily limited to cases of rare, important, and expensive letters and manuscripts, although the forger finds a fruitful field in brief inscriptions and signatures in old books. If you do not have the training and experience necessary to determine their genuineness, or the requisite time to study ink, paper, water-marks, documents of admitted authenticity, and the like, you must trust to the expert and reputable dealer, who is scrupulously careful in such matters, although sometimes innocently led into error as in the case of the Milton receipt.

Dr. George Birkbeck Hill, in his interesting *Talks About Autographs*, unconsciously discloses the fact that he was the unsuspecting victim of a forgery. He laments that he had but two American autographs, one, however,

being that of George Washington. "In my earliest childhood," said the scholarly Englishman, "my father instilled into me such a veneration of that great man, that, when I was a schoolboy of the age of eight or nine, I once angered my little comrades by crying out, 'I wish I was an American, for then I should be a countryman of George Washington.'" Then he gives us the text of his Washington autograph in full, an order for the payment of money, "but" he adds, "it is all in Washington's hand and is the more interesting as it was written in the last year of his life." So pleased with it is the good doctor that he presents a facsimile. Any expert will see at once that it is the reproduction of a forgery. The signature of Washington was invariably bold and firm, but this one is wavering and uncertain. There is an angularity about the letters of the document which is absent in the genuine writings, where the letters are well rounded. In fact, it is exactly like many of the Washington cheques forged by the noted Robert Spring, who achieved dishonourable fame enough to be included in Apple-

ton's *Cyclopædia of American Biography*. Mr. Bowden, Mr. Burns, and Mr. Benjamin, three well-known experts in New York, pronounced it spurious at a glance. But Dr. Hill died without knowing of the imposition and perhaps there was no great harm done. At all events he paid nothing for it; as he says, he never bought an autograph.

Spring was a notorious character and some time I hope to see a full account of his forgeries. It will make an interesting chapter in autographiana. Something about him was published in the *Collector* of April, 1912, and also in the *American Antiquarian Magazine* of May, 1888. He was tried in Philadelphia, for the offence of selling forged autographs of Washington, Franklin, Jefferson, and other American worthies. His method was to get possession of genuine letters and trace them on old paper cut from contemporary books, or to stain the paper with coffee-grounds. He transferred the field of his operations to Canada, where, assuming the *alias* of "Emma Harding," he was quite successful. Thence he went South, where he took the name of

"Fanny Jackson," an alleged daughter of Stonewall Jackson, but his business there was unprofitable and he betook himself to England. He was in due course detected and convicted. "His plea before the Court," says Scott, "was the usual one of all autograph forgers—that he was doing no harm to any one, and indeed never had done a dishonourable action in his life, and only imagined he was innocently contributing to the gratification of the amiable weakness of those who are fond of autographs." I do not know how such a defence was regarded by an English court, but it is very much like old Bob Hart's plea of self-defence when accused of killing a sheep. However efficacious it was, Spring somehow returned to Philadelphia, where, the inmate of a hospital, he died in poverty in 1876.

The works of Mr. Spring are encountered from time to time, for no one ever feels disposed to destroy even a suspected autograph, but Washington cheques and other small Washington documents are regarded by the wary as unworthy of absolute confidence. A gentleman in Massachusetts, who combines

a taste for autographs with a lively sense of humour, recently related to me the tale of his Spring experience. Some years ago, in a casual shop in Boston, he found a "George Washington," the text of which read: "Head-quarters, Bergen County, Sept. 5, 1780. Permission is granted to Mr. Ryerson and his negro man Dick, to pass and repass the picket at Ramapo." He was a little doubtful about it, but yielded to the blandishments of the shopkeeper and invested five dollars in the purchase. Becoming suspicious that it was a "Spring," he was confirmed in his distrust by finding that a neighbour of his had just picked up, in Indiana, a pass "written by George Washington" for Mr. Ryerson and his man Dick. Not long after, at a Boston sale, another Ryerson-Dick pass turned up and brought \$25.00. The purchaser submitted it to divers authorities, some of whom thought it genuine, but the best judges denounced it unhesitatingly as a "Spring" product. Within the past six months a Ryerson-Dick pass has been advertised in an autograph magazine in New York at the price of \$25.00. My

friend writes: "I have thought it would be a good idea to call a convention of all owners of copies of this pass, to meet on the banks of the Ramapo, and tell how they got caught."

So the results of Spring's ingenuity endure. His history contains a lesson to the heedless to avoid the people who are forced by "straitened circumstances" to part with valuable family papers, and who conduct their nefarious traffic mainly by correspondence; for that was the method by which the spurious writings usually got into circulation. It is odd that men, who should know better, are so often deluded into buying bogus autographs; the victims are found among those whom one would scarcely suspect of blind credulity. The prices asked are usually suspiciously low, and mankind is disposed to be fond of "a bargain." There is temptation too in the thought that we are finding something hitherto unknown, which has never been hawked about, and which has not been subjected to handling by dealers. Then too the enthusiast often believes because he wishes to believe. The topic is not an enticing one; the study of it breeds distrust of

our own precious hoards. But the frauds are generally exposed in due season, and the honest dealers are on their guard against the productions of the forgers. Students of autographic history are familiar with the manufactured letters of Schiller, of Byron, and of Shelley, and with the celebrated Edinburgh forgeries perpetrated by Alexander Howland Smith, who was tried, convicted, and sentenced to imprisonment in 1893. Smith dealt principally in Walter Scott and Burns, but his work was so clumsily done that it is difficult to comprehend how any sensible person could have been imposed upon. New Yorkers may remember that the late John S. Kennedy paid a large sum for a lot of the false Burns manuscripts which he presented to the Lenox Library; but Mr. Kennedy was not a collector and he exercised no personal judgment about them; no doubt he trusted to some bookseller. But the most famous case is that of the Frenchman, Vrain-Lucas, who was tried in 1870 for swindling M. Chasles, the distinguished mathematician, who had been an autograph collector for thirty years. The folly of M. Chasles is

almost inconceivable; he must have been under some hypnotic influence. He paid over 140,000 francs for such absurd things as letters from Alcibiades to Pericles, from Alexander the Great to Aristotle, from Cleopatra to Cato, to Cæsar, and to Pompey; from Herod to Lazarus, from Judas Iscariot to Mary Magdalene—all written in French and on paper bearing the Angoulême watermark.

But Vrain-Lucas, who prospered well with his very ancient correspondence, found himself in difficulties when the inventions he had showered upon the imaginative and credulous French mind came into contact with the cool and skeptical judgment of an Englishman. M. Chasles occupied himself in writing a book to prove that it was Pascal and not Sir Isaac Newton who discovered the principle of gravitation. Whether Vrain-Lucas suggested the idea or whether he merely fell in with it, I am not sure, but he met his Waterloo when he playfully dashed off letters purporting to have passed between Pascal and the Hon. Robert Boyle, and finally between Pascal and Sir Isaac. In one of the Pascal-Newton

letters the *insouciant* forger made Newton discuss abstruse geometrical questions at the age of eleven. Charles was so elated over these letters that he showed them to the Academy. M. Prosper Faugère and Sir David Brewster—who had written the life of Newton and who was a Foreign Correspondent of the Academy—both declared that the documents were forgeries, and an investigation resulted in demolishing the whole structure. Vrain-Lucas was tried, convicted, and imprisoned. In the course of the inquiry, Sir David wrote to Sir Frederick Madden, the great authority on ancient manuscripts, this letter which is my only relic of the Vrain-Lucas affair:

ALLERLY MELROSE.

Sept 17" 1867.

SIR—

You are no doubt acquainted with the exciting controversy respecting the forged correspondence between Pascal and Newton.

M. Charles of the Institute has sent me some specimens of the notes alleged to be written by Sir Isaac.

As you must have some of his stuff in the British Museum, I enclose one of the Notes, in the hope that you will have the goodness to compare it with Newton's handwriting and signature and let me know if there is any resemblance between them.

From my recollection of Newton's Mss. at Hurstbourn Park which I carefully examined, and from one of his signatures now before me, I am perfectly convinced that the Letters of Newton are forgeries.

As I have to give back the enclosed note to M. Chasles, I will thank you to return it.

I am, sir,

Ever most truly yrs,

D. BREWSTER

Sir FREDERICK MADDEN

R. N. A.

(Copy of the Note inclosed)

Si on vouloit examiner la philosophie de M. L. il ne seroit pas difficile de faire voir qu'il detourne la signification des mots de leur usage ordinaire; lois par exemple [*sic*] qu'il appelle miracles les choses qui arrive [*sic*] dans le cours ordinaire de la nature; qu'il donne le nom de qualites occultes aux choses dont les causes nous sont inconnus, et qu'il appelle ame ce qui n'anime pas le corps de l'homme. IS. NEWTON

M. Chasles thus gained something resembling immortality. His repute as a man of science has faded and vanished, but so long as there are collectors of autographs, his fame as the monumental gull of the nineteenth century will never be lost in oblivion. It may not be an enviable fame, but perhaps it is better to be remembered for enthusiasm and simplicity than not to be remembered at all.

CHAPTER III

THE AUTOGRAPH IN LITERATURE

Autographs in Literature—Hawthorne's Essay—Hobbies—Bliss and Parker—Autographs in Poetry—An Autographic Lay—John Banvard—Poems by Lowell—Rev. J. F.—G. F. W.—Antiquity of Collecting.

AUTOGRAPHS have been strangely neglected in literature. We may leave out of view the bitter complaints of James Russell Lowell and other eminent growlers, who make such parade of their hostility to collectors, and who seem to think that their personal glory is enhanced by abusing the venturesome seekers for autographic favours; but while I cannot altogether blame them for their restlessness under the infliction, I think they "make believe a great deal."

The very best thing in literature concerning autographs is the little essay of Hawthorne, gentle and quite Hawthornish, inspired by

"a volume of autograph letters chiefly of soldiers and statesmen of the Revolution." The mind of Hawthorne was awake to everything which appealed to the imagination.

Strange [he writes] that the mere identity of paper and ink should be so powerful. The same thoughts might look cold and ineffectual, in a printed book. Human nature craves a certain materialism and clings pertinaciously to what is tangible, as if that were of more importance than the spirit accidentally involved in it. And, in truth, the original manuscript has always something which print itself must inevitably lose.

He does not carry out his thought by saying that the material, the tangible thing which the human mind demands is like the bird or the flower, a glance at which sets in motion the wings of imagination; if he had, he would have said it charmingly and not clumsily as I have done. What he wrote in this brief essay could not fail to gladden the heart of the most enthusiastic lover of autographs, and we can only be sorry that it is not longer. He says, in conclusion:

There are said to be temperaments endowed with sympathies so exquisite, that, by merely handling an autograph, they can detect the writer's character with

unerring accuracy, and read his inmost heart as easily as a less gifted eye would peruse the written page. Our faith in this power, be it a spiritual one, or only a refinement of the physical nature, is not unlimited, in spite of evidence. God has imparted to the human soul a marvellous strength in guarding its secrets, and he keeps at least the deepest and most inward record for his own perusal. But if there be such sympathies as we have alluded to, in how many instances would History be put to the blush by a volume of autograph letters, like this which we now close!

We have also occasional magazine or newspaper articles, usually made up by incompetent writers, of tedious descriptions of somebody's unimportant collections, and a few technical works about as readable as the list of automobile owners in the *Evening Post*. There is a small book by Mr. George R. Sims, a dreary thing, devoid of even the merit of sprightliness; George Birkbeck Hill's *Talks About Autographs*; Dr. Lyman C. Draper's treatise on the autographs of the Signers; Mr. Broadley's *Chats on Autographs*, full of interest and instruction; a little volume of my own, long since forgotten and containing nothing instructive; Dr. Henry T. Scott's *Autograph Collecting*, published in 1894, more than half

of which is taken up with facsimiles and a list of prices now useless and obsolete; and Scott and Pavey's *Guide to the Collector of Historical Documents*, etc., published in 1891. There is also a scarce work by John Gough Nichols, called *Autographs of Remarkable Personages Conspicuous in English History*, which appeared in 1829, but I never saw a copy of it. None of these things may with propriety be called "literature," except, perhaps, Doctor Hill's pleasant papers. I make this assertion, feeling safe because Mr. Broadley, who is a large man, is some three thousand miles away enjoying his treasures at his retreat in the south of England—"The Knapp," Bradpole—and he himself calls his book *A Practical Guide for the Collector*, as Doctor Scott calls his *A Practical Manual for Amateurs and Historical Students*. The fact is that autograph collectors generally want to speak and to write about their own particular possessions, and have more regard for their own accumulations than they have for the literary aspect of the subject. That is the case with me I know, and it is not unusual with the hobby people.

I read recently a story of the late Cornelius N. Bliss, McKinley's Secretary of the Interior, and Judge Alton B. Parker. These two men, strongly antagonistic in politics, chanced to be seated next to each other at some dinner. While they differed in their political views, they were both proud of their collections of cattle. When Mr. Bliss returned home and was asked by Mrs. Bliss what he and the Judge talked about, he replied: "He talked about his herd and I talked about mine." A club has been organised lately, called "The Hobby Club," composed entirely of men who have "hobbies." I venture to predict that at their reunions each man will talk mostly of his own hobby; he may feign a polite interest in the fads of the others, but it will require an effort. As old Stapleton in Marryat's story would say, "It 's human natur'."

Even the luckless beings who have no hobbies and who pretend to find amusement in contemplating the luckier ones who have them, admit that the hobby is a good thing to possess if well managed. In that strange medley *The Doctor*, Southey says:

He is indeed a fortunate man who, if he *must* have a hobby-horse, which is the same thing as saying if he *will* have one, keeps it not merely for pleasure but for use, breaks it in well, has it entirely under command, and gets as much work out of it as he could have done out of a common roadster.

As autographs appear to have little or no place in prose, they are absolutely ignored in poetry. Books are more fortunate; there are volumes of considerable size made up wholly of book-verse. It must be confessed that the field is larger and more tempting, and the fondness for books is general while the love of autographs is limited to a select few. My friend, the son of a poet and the editor of the little monthly which, under the name of *The Collector*, has been for many years published in New York, harmoniously invokes the muse from time to time; but he usually restricts himself to such comparatively trifling themes as:

Foreknowledge, will and fate,
Fix'd fate, free-will, foreknowledge absolute.

Artemus Ward thought that an occasional "goak" improved a comic paper, and in the

belief that a "poem" about autographs might perhaps be appropriate to the pages of an "autograph periodical" I favoured him with an effusion substantially as follows:

LYRA AUTOGRAPHICA

Of books the poets often sing,
But every critic laughs
To see that strange and wondrous thing,
A verse on autographs.

Oh, why not autographic lays,
I own I cannot see,
"L. S." and "A. L. S." to praise,
And sometimes "L. S. D."?

The rhymester hastens to address
Sweet screeds on "bliss" and "kisses,"
Not to "D. S." or "A. N. S."
But merely trifling Misses.

A book is often dear, 't is true,
Bound in levant or calf,
Yet surely some affection's due
Unto the autograph.

So let some glorious Milton rise
Of autographs to chant,
For I confess, to my surprise
I 've tried to—but I can't.

I had well-nigh overlooked a choice morsel
of poesy which a Boston friend bestowed

upon me in his malicious desire to bring my favourite pursuit into ridicule. The handwriting is poor, but I have been able to decipher all but the signature. This is the jewel of metrical delight.

'T would provoke a judge to laugh
When folks ask one's autograph.
Worthless sure as weeds or chaff
Is an empty autograph.
Why should any but riff-raff
Care about an autograph?
Yet since harder it was by half
To refuse our autograph,
We Pierian springs who quaff
Oft must give our autograph.

April 23, 1849.

The author was ashamed to sign his name in such a way that it could be read.

He got up all the available rhymes to autograph—except one—and adapted his sentiments to fit them. I can fancy how clever he deemed his verselets to be and how proudly he scrawled them on a fair page of his friend's album; for the sheet on which they appear is manifestly taken from one of these fearsome books.

My Boston acquaintance has also kindly sent to me this production of John Banvard, the Panorama man, whose biography sets forth that he painted a picture three miles long for his panorama and wrote seventeen hundred poems.

Thus speaks the wise, prophetic sage:
We 've entered now the "electric age;"
The time is near when autographs
Can be despatched by telegraphs.

If this is one of the seventeen hundred, I am glad that I have never encountered the other sixteen hundred and ninety-nine. This fountain of poesy burst forth in 1881, when the telegraph was not a startling novelty, and "despatching" things "by telegraph" was common enough—but not "by telegraphs." Evidently he thought he needed a perfect rhyme for "autographs," but he did not really succeed in getting one.

In reference to his prediction, I may say that some years ago I invested what was a considerable sum—for me—in an invention merely because it was called the "Telauto-graph," which actually conveys the auto-

graphic message itself. I have an idea of applying my dividends to the purchase of holograph letters of Thomas Lynch, Jr., Button Gwinnett, and William Shakespeare—when I get the dividends.

In bewailing the paucity of autographic verse I have not forgotten James Russell Lowell, that professed hater of autographs; but, strictly speaking, his poem is not *about* autographs—it *is* an autograph itself; and he did it fairly well, probably making a wry face meanwhile; undoubtedly “it revolted him but he did it.” I find it in the ninth volume of the Riverside edition of his works.

FOR AN AUTOGRAPH

Though old the thought and oft exprest,
'Tis his at last who says it best—
I'll try my fortune with the rest

Life is a leaf of paper white
Whereon each one of us may write
His word or two, and then comes night.

“Lo, time and space enough,” we cry,
“To write an epic!” so we try
Our wits upon the edge, and die.

Muse not which way the pen we hold,
Luck hates the slow and loves the bold,
Soon comes the darkness and the cold.

Greatly begin! though thou have time
But for a line, be that sublime—
Not failure, but low aim, is crime.

Ah, with what lofty hope we came!
But we forget it, dream of fame,
And scrawl, as I do here, a name.

In a magazine called *The Autograph*, for March, 1912, the following is given as a quotation from Lowell, but I do not discover it in my edition.

AN AUTOGRAPH

O'er the wet sands an insect crept
Ages ere man on earth was known—
And patient Time, while Nature slept,
The slender tracing turned to stone.

'T was the first autograph; and ours?
Prithee, how much of prose or song,
In league with the creative powers,
Shall 'scape Oblivion's broom so long?

This conveys the idea that the first autograph was written by an insect. It does not bear the marks of Lowell's fastidious taste,

and if he really wrote it I am not surprised that it is not included in the Riverside edition of his "Works."

Quite often odd and freaky bits find their way into the *omnium gatherum* of a collector. A friend gave me some months ago a letter from a brother collector in which the writer says: "Amongst my letters is one from a hangman, and amongst my detached autographs is one of a man who was 'hung, drawn, and quartered' (I imagine that he was the last, in England)." Naturally this last-mentioned gem was placed among the *detached* autographs; and the communication from the hangman ought to strike a chord in the breast of every collector. In my own possession is a curious record of the solemn silliness of a bigoted anti-autograph ass. I do not know who the Reverend J. F—— was, or anything about him except that he was at large as long ago as 1836, and I trust that he has no able-bodied descendants living. It is amusing to observe how seriously the despiser of autographs takes himself; what a deplorable lack of humour he exhibits; how gravely

he proclaims his own superabundant righteousness and wisdom; with what compassion he rebukes the ungodly person who betrays a hankering after specimens of handwriting. It appears, by a memorandum appended to the sermon, that "Mr. F—— having been asked for a contribution to a Lady's Album, complied, and wrote a few lines rather reluctantly; on the next day regretting that he had acceded to what he usually discountenanced, he wrote the preceding note which he requested might be pasted over his previous contribution." Ah! the woman tempted him and he did wrong—that is, he did write. Like many another pious humbug, he thought to conceal his dire sin by "pasting" something over the record of his crime, and behold! he has only preserved that record even until the twentieth century. The "preceding note" deserves quotation not only for its intrinsic demerits but for the Johnsonian eloquence of its style.

Will the proprietor of this volume accept it as a sincerely friendly sentiment that I do greatly wish the Ladies would be cured of this vain fantasy of Albums? It is a littleness of which it would be worthy of their

good sense and good taste to rid themselves. The volumes, when filled, are more worthless than any others of the same quantity of contents; a collection of unmeaning scraps, written under the awkwardness of having nothing to suggest *what* to write (unless something to insinuate a compliment to the "fair possessor"), and written reluctantly, except perhaps by those whose vanity may be flattered by finding their names so much accounted of. And as to having a number of *names* put on the paper by the owners of them, it does appear to be a strange fancy to set any value on such an acquisition. With several ladies I have successfully remonstrated against the fashion and the folly, and have afterwards been thanked for having induced them to throw it away. I should be gratified, and even proud if I might hope to persuade the proprietor of *this* volume to the same worthy determination.

J. F.

March 14, 1836.

But let us be just to F——. I am not sure that he was wrong in denouncing albums; and he spells "Ladies" once at least with a capital L. On the whole, I think I will withdraw the offensive epithet I bestowed upon him. Perhaps it was the album and not the autograph which aroused his clerical wrath. At all events, he is entitled to the benefit of the doubt, as every criminal is who is arraigned at the

bar of justice. But there is no excuse for his clumsy attempt to hide his transgression by paste. I judge by inspection of my original that the "Fair Proprietor," unmoved by the oration, kept both of the writings and declined to paste.

Another example of self-conceit is afforded by a printed paper given to me by Mr. Goodspeed of Boston. It reads as follows:

LITTLE HOLLAND HOUSE, KENSINGTON W.

Mr. G. F. W—— regrets to say that it is against a principle he holds, with reference to the modern custom of autograph collecting, to accede to the request just made of him.

It does not require a Sherlock Holmes to detect that the request was for "his autograph." W—— must have "held" a fine assortment of "principles." While he is not to be scolded for declining to write his name at the solicitation of the impudent creature who disturbs the peaceful meditations of the great, it is sublime self-admiration which exalts his unwillingness to the dignity of a "principle." He means to say that he dislikes to give his signature to an intrusive stranger; the request

annoys him, puts him to trouble. Longfellow and Oliver Wendell Holmes, whose good nature in the matter of autographs has become almost proverbial, were certainly not unprincipled; their principles were surely as good as those of Mr. G. F. W——; but they were not puffed up with personal pride. He might as well have said that he held principles against being jostled on the street, or buying a paper from a persistent newsboy, or having a hard-boiled egg for breakfast, or using French vermouth in his cocktail. With all his “principles,” he could not help writing letters now and then, and I have one of them in which he excuses himself for not keeping a promise to lend some pictures, on the ground that when he promised, he forgot that he did not have the pictures. Manifestly he had no principle against making a promise which he could not perform.

It will be observed that the lordly W—— refers to “the *modern* custom of autograph collecting.” But is it an extremely modern custom? Mr. Broadley reminds us that Pliny and Cicero were collectors; and we are told by

others that, in the palmy days of Greece and Rome, large sums were paid for autographs and that there were thieves and forgers of them. Yet those sapient gentlemen W. Robertson Nicoll and Thomas Seccombe, in their *History of English Literature*, assert that Boswell "initiated autograph hunting," because he wrote to Lord Chatham to "honour him with a letter now and then," thus characteristically missing the point of Boswell's application. The Chinese are said to prize autographs "above all treasures" and to regard them "with idolatrous veneration;" but whether this is true since our Oriental friends have begun to indulge in the modern luxuries of rebellion and a republic I cannot say. The Paston Letters include five large volumes of autograph letters of the reigns of Henry VI. and Henry VII.; and whether or not people collected then after our own fashion, we know that the custom flourished in its most virulent form in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, when "men and women of light and learning were accustomed to carry about oblong volumes of vellum, on which their friends and acquaint-

ances were requested to write some motto or phrase under his or her signature." John Milton wrote in one of these *Alba Amicorum* in 1651, and indeed at Geneva in 1639 in the album of Camillus Cardoyn, a Neapolitan nobleman then living in that city, but he had never heard of W——nor of the Reverend J. F——, and his conscience had not been properly awakened to the enormity of the offence. It would have been an edifying spectacle, the pursuit of Mr. W—— by the autograph king, Mr. B——, with an album, while W——, like a modern Joseph, was fleeing from the presence of the tempter.

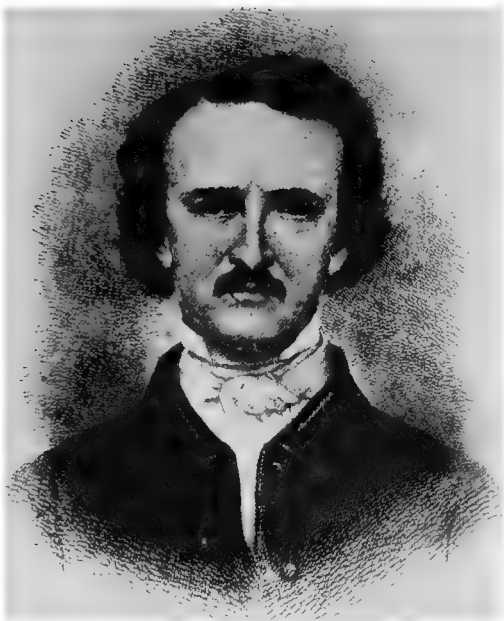
But why should we pour the vials of our mighty wrath upon the heads of the wretched W—— and the futile F——? It is unbecoming and unwise to abuse anybody; that method of speech should be left to "progressive" orators and the advocates of woman suffrage. If W—— and F—— could know how severe we are with them, they might, as Grosvenor implored Bunthorne in *Patience*, entreat us by the memory of our aunt, not to *curse* them. Yet as they will never know anything about our

CHAPTER IV

AUTOGRAPHS AND EXTRA-ILLUSTRATION

Poe's Article—Lithographs—Poe, Nelson, and Wellington—
Mr. Marvin's Chapter—Mr. Broadley on Extra-Illustration
—Autographs in Extra-Illustration—Some Minor Errors in
Mr. Broadley's Book—Comparisons of Collections.

IN referring to the literature of autographs I omitted to mention a "Chapter on Autography" by Edgar Allan Poe, which consists principally of remarks about persons whom he called "living *literati* of the country," supplemented by some childish comments on their chirography. He includes some people of importance, like Emerson, Irving, and Bryant, and a good many of no importance whatever, such as J. Beauchamp Jones, Mrs. M. St. Leon Loud, and one McJilton whose name does not fill the trump of fame. The lady is described as "one of the finest poets of this country," which reminds one forcibly of Mr. Jefferson Brick's estimate of Major Pawkins and pre-



Edgar A. Poe

Edgar Allan Poe
From an etching

parens us for the assertion, later on, that "Mr. J. R. Lowell, of Massachusetts, is entitled, in our opinion, to at least the second or third place among the poets of America." In view of these expressions, it may be well to add that the article was not intended to be humorous. It is written in the worst magazine style of the period and bears evidence of having been a "pot-boiler." Poor Poe was compelled to waste much time and energy on many such wretched things for the sake of the pittance they brought to him. He was apt to be dull and sometimes offensive when he indulged in what he was pleased to call criticism of his contemporaries; most of it now seems very thin, arrogant, and impertinent. This I say although he does utter the profound truth that "the feeling which prompts to the collection of autographs is a natural and rational one." The commonplace yet pretentious essay, if essay it may be styled, would never, of course, have survived the magazine which gave it birth had not the after-acquired fame of the author given some interest to even his poorest scribblings.

A comparison of Poe's method of dealing with autographs and that of Hawthorne will show clearly the great difference between the two minds. There was always a bit of the charlatan about Poe, despite his flashes of brilliancy. Hawthorne's autographic comments reveal the calm, sincere, comprehensive sanity of a great personage, while Poe's might have been penned by some shallow schoolboy.

Autograph hunters well know the value of a scrap of Poe's neat and beautiful handwriting. I had what I thought was a splendid letter of his, although I was a little suspicious about its authenticity; and one day, resolved to learn the truth however disagreeable it might be, I called upon the late Charles De Forest Burns to pass judgment. That candid and skilful expert reluctantly revealed to me that it was only an excellent lithograph, and I was no longer repentant over the fact that I had caused it to be bound up in an "extra-illustrated" volume.

Experience has taught me that good lithographs are much more deceptive than photographs. It is well to be cautious, for example,

In short I could see no real reason why a Magazine of ~~the~~ ^{the} name, could not be made to reach a circulation of ~~20,000~~ ^{20,000}. Circulate among 20,000 subscribers. In the
any the best intellect & Education of the Land. This
was a thought which stimulated my fancy & my ambition.
The influence of such a journal would be vast indeed,
and I dreamed of honestly employing that influence in
the sacred cause of the Beautiful, the just, & the True.
Even in a ~~magazine~~ ^{magnificent} view the object was a ~~great~~ ^{one}.
The journal I proposed would be a large ^{128 pp.} octavo ~~on the general~~
printed with ~~fine~~ ^{good} type, in single column, on the finest
paper, and dictating everything of what is termed "embellishment"
with the exception of ~~some~~ an occasional portrait of a literary
man, or some well-executed wood design in obvious illustra-
tion; the text, of mean volume I ~~unhesitatingly~~ ^{at 5-8} estimated
the expenses. Could I circulate 20,000 cop., the cost wd be about
\$30,000, estimating all contingencies at the highest rate. There
would be a balance of \$70,000 per annum. ~~Enough~~
~~of these things I reflected that~~ ^{21 50 ex}
But not to trust too implicitly to a priori reasonings, and
at the same time to make myself thoroughly master of all details
which might guide me ^{in the more business of publication}, I entered
a few steps into the field of experiments. I joined the "Mess-
enger" as you know, ^{which was then in its 2d year with} ~~I read then~~ 700 subscribers & the general
query was that because a Magazine had never succeeded
one South of the Potomac therefore a Magazine never ~~could~~
succeed. Yet in despite of this & in despite of the wretched taste

about so-called Wellington letters, especially formal ones; for it is known that the Duke, whose correspondence of that sort was enormous, was compelled to resort to the use of lithographed forms to help him, and the imitations are excellent. There is another danger about his letters, to be encountered in most cases of public men who have secretaries, illustrated in a story related by Lionel Tollenmache in his *Old and Odd Memories*. An Eton boy, who had shot some yellow-hammers, was told by mischievous schoolmates that these birds were under the Duke's special guardianship, and was hoaxed into writing a letter of humble apology for his assault upon the protected yellow-hammers. He received a curt answer, saying that F. M. the Duke of Wellington could not make out what he meant. One of the masters, anxious to obtain an autograph, bought this reply for five shillings and afterwards discovered that the letter was almost certainly written by a secretary who could counterfeit exactly the Duke's handwriting.

Doctor Scott tells of a supposed letter of

Lord Nelson, belonging to a poor labouring man, which appeared from a tracing to have been written by Nelson with his left hand, but when examined by an expert on behalf of a would-be purchaser, turned out to be a mere lithograph, on cartridge paper, perfectly clean, and "had never been sealed or properly folded into the shape for posting"; the date of the letter being before the time of envelopes, which did not come into general use until about 1839. Well disposed friends, completely innocent of wrongful intent, have often submitted to me lithographed letters, but except in the Poe case I have usually been able to detect the truth about them on a mere inspection; and in that instance the letter came from a dealer who was himself deceived; undoubtedly he had passed it without due examination, although the price was so small that it ought to have awakened distrust in the minds of both of us.

Mr. Frederic Rowland Marvin devotes a chapter of his *Excursions of a Book Lover* to "Holographs." He has disarmed me by kindly giving me a copy of the book, or I might be

tempted to break a friendly lance with him on some of his propositions; not however on his assertion that "the letters and journals of men who have filled positions of public trust are often of the utmost value." But when he says that "Van Buren was regarded in his day as a very trickish and unreliable politician," I am led to express an emphatic dissent. The man who was United States Senator, Governor of New York, Secretary of State, Vice-President, and President was not so regarded, except perhaps by some of his political enemies. That estimate of him is a growth of later days, fostered by the Whig partisans who used to write our history for us. The contrary has been established by the late Edward Morse Shepard in his masterly little biography of Van Buren, and later historians are gradually discarding the old slanders. It is a mistake to accept as the general judgment of the community contemporary assaults upon a statesman made by prejudiced partisans.

Mr. Broadley in his *Chats on Autographs* says:

The classification of autographs has given rise to endless discussion. On this subject I am at issue with Mr. Joline. Personally I regard extra-illustration as the most effective and interesting plan of arranging and preserving autographs. Mr. Joline, on the other hand, "meditates" upon extra-illustration as only an incident or contingent possibility in autograph collection."

I am not quite able to perceive exactly what this has to do with the *classification* of autographs; I think he means the *arrangement* of them after they have been collected. Nor do I fully understand how the mere arrangement of them can be anything but an "incident" to the main thing, which is the obtaining and possession of them. If one accumulates a number of precious stones, whether he puts them in a safe deposit vault or in his overcoat pocket is certainly only an "incident," for they were surely not acquired for the purpose of adorning the vault or of adding to the attractiveness of the pocket. Whether your soldiers are attired in scarlet jackets or in unobtrusive khaki is but an incident in the assembling of an army. But with respect to extra-illustration, I do not know that there is

any *issue* between Mr. Broadley and myself. Some years ago I casually suggested, innocently enough and without the least notion of dogmatising about the subject, that I was "unable to decide" whether it is a good plan to employ valuable autographs in extra-illustration; and I expressed the view that it "really belittles a fine, full, and interesting letter" to insist on its permanent association with anything else. Ten years have passed since I uttered this somewhat harmless dictum; I am older now and, I hope, wiser. I have reached the sage conclusion that the best way to arrange one's autographs is to do it to please one's self. Advancing years make us more tolerant. In the matter of rings, for example, I may prefer to wear them on my fingers, but a South African king may be fonder of wearing them in his nose, and his method may suit him far better than mine would.

I cannot tell how others may be affected but I find that a good letter, taken by itself, and bearing substantially the appearance which it had when it left the hands of the writer, im-

presses my imagination more deeply than it does when I come upon it bound in a book that may or may not be worthy to contain it; and imagination plays a great part in the pleasure of autograph ownership. This may be only a personal idiosyncrasy; tastes vary so and I am not sufficiently self-centred to regard my own as a standard. Some men love red neckties and chequered waistcoats; this seems strange to me, but I am far from wishing to get up an "issue" about it; and would no more do so than I would attempt to make one with a man who likes cold, boiled veal, which I detest—that trait being the only characteristic which I have in common with Macaulay.

We must remember that our autographs are not for ourselves only; ultimately they will pass into the possession of our successors. If one of these successors especially covets, for example, a fine letter of Keats, he does not like to be compelled to buy a big book or set of books, full of things which he does not want, in order to obtain the one thing which he does want. I am by no means opposed to the practice of extra-illustrating books; I have

frequently been guilty of it and have enjoyed it and the results of it; but this I will maintain, without fear of the punishment threatened by Mr. Broadley, that the real autograph lover, the genuine one, the simon pure article, the one who owns no other goddess than the deity Autographina, preserves his treasures in portfolios, unmolested by paste, ribbons, or printed text—not even inlaid. A true book-collector will not, except in a case of extreme necessity, destroy an ancient, faded, and decayed covering in order to enshrine the object of his affection in the richest and daintiest of bindings. When one has a complete set of the “Signers of the Declaration of Independence,” or of “Napoleon and his Marshals,” it may not be amiss to bind up the one with Sanderson’s *Lives*, as Doctor Emmet does, or the other with Sloane’s *Napoleon*—or perhaps with some less voluminous work; but few extra-illustrators are content with such simple procedure. They are for ever overloading their pets not only with autographs and with portraits of persons incidentally referred to in the text, but with “views” of places mentioned

by the author. Years ago the late John H. V. Arnold, a confirmed extra-illustrator, wrote to me:

If you can succeed in making up your mind at some future time that you have gathered enough materials to satisfy you and bind up your bantling, you will be possessed of courage enough to do almost anything. To one who really becomes interested in the "business" it is the most fascinating of occupations to "extend" a good book, but it is hard to say "hold—enough!"

Mr. Broadley himself unconsciously furnishes an example of what many regard as an objectionable feature of the use of valuable letters in extra-illustration. He tells us that he has "extended to *seventeen* volumes" the two volumes of the *Recollections* of Edmund Yates. Letters of Yates himself would naturally find a place in such a collection, and he may well have availed himself of several minor ones having no especial rarity or distinction. But let us suppose that he had "inserted" some important letters of Thackeray or of Dickens, as he may have done, for both of those men played a leading part in one of the most important occurrences in the life of Yates—not a mere

autographic specimen but one of high intrinsic interest; fancy it obscured in the rubbish of seventeen volumes! It would be like a diamond in a muck-heap, although I do not mean to apply that offensive term to the interesting gatherings included in Mr. Broadley's volumes, no doubt a delightful assemblage. But to me the beauty and the individuality of the rare letter would be greatly dimmed by its surroundings. Mr. Broadley, who is a lawyer of high reputation, undoubtedly recognises the force of the phrase "*Noscitur a sociis.*" The enthusiastic extra-illustrator is apt to lose his sense of proportion and to mingle trifles and rarities without careful discrimination. He often thrusts his nobility in the companionship of the *hoi polloi* unless he has more self-restraint than I can command. By the way, is it strictly accurate to call the insertion of autograph-letters in books "Grangerising"? As I remember it—the sage of Bradpole will correct me if I am wrong—James Granger, the Shiplake parson, founder of the cult, limited his industry to portraits, and one of the chief objections urged against

his methods, wholly inapplicable to autographs, was that it was often necessary to mutilate or to destroy valuable books in order to procure the desired portraits and plates. In these days, when it is comparatively easy to find portraits not connected with bound volumes, there is not much force in that objection.

There is one point, however—an insignificant one—on which I must take issue with Mr. Broadley, and that is in regard to the spelling of the last name of James Anthony Froude, whom he calls "Frowde," twice in the text and once in the index. There were Frowdes in England in the eighteenth century, and there are some there yet, Mr. Henry Frowde among the number; but neither the historian nor his father spelled the name in that way. Broadley quotes one of my Froude letters in full—it is plainly signed "Froude"—as well as several others from my collection, without giving me any credit for their possession; but he did not mean to do me any injustice, for he is one of the fairest-minded and most kindly of men. But he is not

scrupulously careful about little things: we find our friend W. H. Bixby, of St. Louis, masquerading under the name of "Bexby," and he makes me use the impossible word "colligendering;" however, that is probably a printer's error. Naturally he is not familiar with American collectors or he would not associate my humble name with the illustrious names of Emmet and Morgan, which is flattering but undeserved; it is very much like speaking of Hannibal, Napoleon, and Tom Thumb as distinguished generals. My insignificant collection may no more be compared with Emmet's and Morgan's than a cross-roads Methodist chapel may be compared with St. Peter's at Rome; but one can always forgive errors of that nature. Still the unmerited prominence which Mr. Broadley gives to me in his book reminds me somewhat of my set of the publication called *The World's Best Literature*, in which Mr. Denton J. Snider (of Ohio) occupies twenty-six pages, and Socrates, sixteen.

CHAPTER V

THE AUTOGRAPH MARKET

- A Stately Beggar—Percy Fitzgerald—Charles Robinson's Article—Dr. Brownson's Joke—Edward Eggleston—Gladstone—Henry James Byron—Lawrence Mendenhall's Paper—Its Follies—Dr. William B. Sprague—Buying Autographs—Laurence Hutton's Views—"Doraku"—A Dinner Jest—General Ignorance about Autographs—A Reporter—Gwinnett.

THE beggar of autographs and his practices have been the subject of much comment not always good-natured, and it must be confessed that he is often irritating, causing grievous mortification to real collectors, while sometimes he is merely ridiculous. Mr. C. E. Goodspeed, of Boston, has supplied me with many curiosities connected with the autograph mania, and he lately presented to me a specimen of the impressive in mendicancy, covering two folio pages and bearing date October 11, 1844. If the pear-headed king of the French did not hasten to yield to the eloquence of

this request, which seems to have emanated from a source no less dignified than an English Custom-House, he richly deserved to lose the crown which was in fact plucked from his brow about four years later. The epistle reads as follows:

To his Most Gracious Majesty Louis Philippe, King
of the French;

May it please Your Majesty:

Having succeeded in accumulating an extensive collection of autographs of the most illustrious and eminent personages throughout Europe, I regret that all my efforts to enrich my list with that of Your Majesty, have been hitherto unavailing.

In expressing the hope that Your Majesty may graciously be pleased to condescend to supply the vacant niche in my collection, I throw myself entirely upon the urbanity that distinguishes Your Majesty's character, and seek pardon for this act of presumption.

Permit me, Royal Sir, to offer my heartfelt congratulations on Your Majesty's visit to our shores, and with dutiful obedience and the most deferential submission,

I am,

Your Majesty's most humble and very faithful
servant,

E—— B——.

This address to monarchy is more elaborate and diffuse, yet less truthful and sincere than the one which is said to have been made to

King Christian by a product of the bounding West who happened to be American Minister to Denmark. The courteous sovereign had just "treated" him to a "drink," and when the ceremony was over, the envoy of the great Republic remarked: "King, that whiskey of yours is no good. I 'll send you some that will make your hair curl." I understand that he kept his word so far as sending the whiskey was concerned; but whether it affected the King's hirsute adornments in the manner promised, history fails to record

Percy Fitzgerald, who is responsible for more sloppy books than almost any modern writer, has, of course, a few words to say about the autograph beggar, characterised by his customary ineptitude. In his *Memories of an Author* he refers to the letters of appreciation written to authors, boasting that he has received such letters "from America, Australia, Denmark, Norway, Iceland." I should think that he might have had a large number from Iceland. He adds:

The author must be on his guard, however, against the collectors, of whom there are a great number, and

who season their application with a feigned admiration. The ordinary writer must not lay the flattering unction to his soul that his handwriting is desired on account of his celebrity. It is wanted for strictly commercial purposes, for completing sets of autographs, for "Grangerising" books and the like, or for illustrating topographical histories, where a specimen of the native's handwriting comes in handily. Forster's *Life of Dickens* is a favourite work for "Grangerising." The present writer figures in it *passim*; his writing, therefore, is desirable and a necessity. I am too modest to put it on any higher ground than this.

His "modesty" will never hurt him much. I do not know what "topographical history" his autograph would adorn, unless it be the History of Noodleland. Is the "completion of a set of autographs" necessarily "a commercial purpose"? Would Mr. Broadley admit that asking an autograph for "Grangerising a book" (as if one could Grangerise anything else) was "a commercial purpose"? The conclusion that to request an autograph for a set or for extra-illustration implies that the person addressed has no "celebrity" is an excellent example of Mr. Fitzgerald's powers of reasoning. One suspects that the whole

paragraph owes its existence to a wish to display the writer's alleged intimacy with Dickens; I discover only three references to Fitzgerald in the *Life* by Forster, although *passim* means "everywhere, all through."

Some years ago the *Cosmopolitan Magazine* published an article by a Mr. Charles Robinson—described as a journalist, who was "*privately* educated for the bar." It was a shocking revelation of the methods of the pseudo-collector, calculated to make even one of the Public Library lions turn red for shame; and the writer appeared to be utterly unconscious of his own turpitude—rather proud of it in fact. Heaven knows what he would have been guilty of doing if he had been *publicly* and not privately educated for the bar. Practices like those which he confesses are what make the name of "autograph collector" odious to people who do not understand that there are many different varieties of the genus. How a decent man can consider it gentlemanly or proper to assert what is untrue and to deceive others merely to obtain their autographs, is beyond my comprehen-

sion. This individual tells us that Horace Greeley called the autograph hunters "those mosquitoes of literature." After reading Mr. Robinson's painful exposure of his own moral obliquity, I do not wonder that they were so described by one who might be characterised as "the bumblebee of politics."

Greeley himself has furnished numerous anecdotes of an autographic nature to the press humourists, such as the one about his letter discharging an incompetent printer which that person used for years as a letter of recommendation. There is also another, which has been told of many magnates, about his writing to an applicant, "I never send my autograph to any one. Yours truly, Horace Greeley." I happen to have a letter written by the loco-foco Universalist who became a prominent Catholic, Orestes Augustus Brownson, which reads thus:

ELIZABETH, NEW JERSEY, Jan. 17, 1864.

MY DEAR LADY: I make it a rule never to answer a letter requesting my autograph.

Very truly your obedient servant,

O. A. BROWNSON.

Perhaps the reverend gentleman was joking with the "Dear Lady," but if so, I think it must have been the solitary joke of his long life.

This odd way of protesting that you cannot or will not do a certain thing when you are in the very act of doing it is illustrated by another letter which is also in my possession. Edward Eggleston wrote to Mr. Dorlon, who was an arrant autograph beggar forty years ago and whose scraps still turn up occasionally among the "cheap lots":

BROOKLYN, May 20th, 1873.

WM. L. DORLON ESQ.

MY DEAR SIR:

Writing an autograph letter is a thing I never could do, especially when I have nothing to write about. I should like to oblige you by sending you something but you must excuse me.

Very Respectfully yours,

EDWD EGGLESTON

This was before the days of the typewriter, and like the man who had been talking prose all his life without knowing it, Mr. Eggleston seems to have been unaware that every letter

he had ever written with his own hand was "an autograph letter."

I had indulged in the hope that I had come upon an example more illustrious in its origin; but while the handwriting is not wholly unlike that of Mr. Gladstone, I have reluctantly reached the conclusion that it is the production of some imitative private secretary.

10 DOWNING STREET.

WHITEHALL.

Mr. Gladstone much regrets that the applications which he receives for his autograph, from persons with whom he has not the honour of being acquainted, are so numerous that he is obliged to make it a rule not to accede to them.

While I am on the subject of responses to autograph beggars, I may well refer to those which are meant to be "funny" and which usually take the form of allusion to cheques or written pecuniary obligations. If the writers knew how little originality they display they might perhaps refrain from such facetiousness. An example of this sort of thing is afforded by Henry James Byron, the dramatist, who writes:

HAYMARKET THEATRE.

Oct. 31—1875.

MY DEAR SIR:

You appear to consider my autograph a desirable thing; the only way to prove its utter and complete worthlessness is to place I. O. U. over the signature of

Yours faithfully,

H. J. BYRON

The Bancrofts in their naïve *Recollections of Sixty Years Ago* (published in 1909) speak of Henry J. Byron as "the celebrated author of the brilliant series of Strand burlesques." The examples they give of his wit—which correspond with that of the highly comic letter just quoted—arouse no regret that the "brilliant burlesques" have faded into oblivion. Now and then we lament over the inane and silly "musical comedies" of the present day, but they are no worse than Byron's—which were made up chiefly of English puns, and those of the latter part of the last century were of the most distressing and soul-harrowing character.

Another illustration of the way in which the laudable occupation of collecting autographs is misrepresented by people who masquerade as

collectors, may be found in a short article published in some magazine whose name escapes me, by Mr. Lawrence Mendenhall, under the title of "Among My Autographs." It is rather colourless in the main, profusely adorned with facsimiles, but it lacks the exceedingly offensive features of Mr. Charles Robinson's effusion. Among other things, Mr. Mendenhall proclaims, in that large, generalising way, as if he had been "retained to defend," that "autograph collectors are by nature the most plausible, innocent, and truthful beings in the world; it is only the stubbornness of our victims which causes us unfortunate beings to resort to subterfuge." There it is again! Unconsciously he shows the cloven foot; or, to mix the metaphors, he suffers the lion's skin to slip from his head and shoulders. Real collectors do not want his sorry excuses; they do not resort to subterfuge at all; they have no "victims"; they scorn to pester people of distinction with mendicant letters. A decent self-respect would restrain them from such performances if they had any disposition to resort to them. The author of the brief dissertation

volunteers some other suggestions which afford good evidence that he was only learning his alphabet as a collector. In regard to preserving autographs he solemnly remarks: "The important point, in my opinion, is to keep all specimens flat, letters especially to be unfolded, and to remain so, in order to avoid handling." This advice is good enough, if quite elementary; but he might as well tell us not to use them as book-marks or not to give them to the baby to play with. He goes on to instruct us how "signatures" should be neatly pasted (corners only) with flour-paste, upon cards of uniform size. Except with regard to those of men whose letters or documents are practically unattainable, the best way to arrange signatures is to pile them up neatly in the middle of the back-yard and set fire to them; or, if that seems objectionable, to bestow them upon some bright little boy as ornaments for his little album. *Pace* Mr. Broadley, they may be good enough to use for extra-illustration purposes. Why should any rational being, "erect upon two legs and bearing the outward semblance of a man," write to

another man for his signature when he can buy almost any one he wants from Mr. Benjamin by an expenditure of a trifle more than the cost of paper, envelope, and postage, and that too without bringing discredit upon what, when practised properly, is a dignified pursuit?

Yet I must do Mr. Mendenhall the justice to concede that he has some warrant in assuming that in the past respectable collectors "wrote for autographs,"—even the illustrious divine, Doctor William B. Sprague of Albany, the revered and honoured pioneer of American autograph collectors. I was slightly shocked when I found the evidence of it in an interesting letter of Mr. John Pierce published in an Albany newspaper in 1909. Mr. Pierce quotes a passage from Abdy's *Journal of a Residence and Tour in the United States in the Year 1834*, describing a visit to Dr. Sprague.

He had [wrote Abdy] a singular taste for collecting autograph signatures of persons remarkable in their generation for something or other. He showed me a considerable number—many of them of very equivocal celebrity. There were some of an early date; and others more "modern instances." He had the

signs manual of Lord Teignmouth—Lord Bexley—and Sir Francis Burdett;—all obtained from these distinguished personages in reply to letters he had written to request the honour of having specimens of their handwriting. He had sent four—the fourth received no answer. He asked me to guess who it was; after telling the names I was right—it was Lord Brougham. He had made application of a similar kind to upwards of fifty public characters in his own country, and had, with one or two exceptions, attributable to accident, met with obliging and courteous replies.

That guess about Brougham was not a remarkable one.

But that was in a time when, as Mr. Pierce remarks, “it was easy to receive as a gift that which we are now unable to buy,” and he might have added, “when it was difficult to buy what we can now obtain for a trifling sum.” There were no regular dealers, in this country at least, and we were not favoured with the showers of catalogues which pour forth from London, Paris, New York, Chicago, Berlin, and even Syracuse, N. Y. Auction sales there were, but not many. The collector’s task in those days was far different from that of present times and required something

more than a laudable curiosity and a plethoric bank account. It will be observed, however, that Doctor Sprague did not resort to any of Mr. Mendenhall's "subterfuges." He asked plainly for what he wanted, and being a doctor of divinity of well-earned repute, he generally got what he asked for. He himself was generous in his gifts to others.

Mr. Mendenhall naïvely assures us that an "almost necessary adjunct and incentive to the collector is *a good biographical dictionary*." I like that idea of an "incentive"; it cheers me to fancy a collector, his enthusiasm fired by a dictionary, sallying forth for an attack upon the great, with his biographical compendium in one hand and his precious album in the other, reading as he runs some such item as: "Dickens, Charles: celebrated novelist. Born 1812," and exclaiming, "Oh, yes! Must have *him*. Let me see, where does he live? Oh, confound it—he's dead. Must hunt up his family."

And then, poor youth—for surely he is a youth—he *must* have "a catalogue of every signature and letter, as well as of all duplicates,

enabling him to turn to any specimen in a moment." It will be observed that he ignores documents and author's manuscripts entirely. Why, a true collector, even if he has his thousands of letters and documents, ought to be able to lay his hand on the one he seeks, in the dark. I do not mean to be understood as disparaging the value of a catalogue; it is a good thing to have as a record; but not worth much as a guide to locality, if the autographs are properly classified. One of the great pleasures is to shift them about, to rearrange them, "fuss" over them—not disturbing the classification—and when you do that, you quickly make mince-meat of your index-catalogue. But perhaps I am wrong; I often am. Each man must have his own way with his collection, although it may be made up chiefly of "signatures." He may even frame his specimens, put glass over them, and hang them on the wall. I once had a D.S. of an old Pennsylvania Governor which some one had treated in that preposterous fashion.

Possibly there are some who think it a horrible waste to spend money for autographs.

My experience teaches me that in this world we seldom get much of value without, in some way, paying money for it, and it seems to me that to purchase and pay for what we acquire is considerably more praiseworthy and respectable than to go about begging for it. The late Laurence Hutton—peace to his ashes!—would never tolerate in his portfolios an autograph letter not written to him personally and, of course, without solicitation. But he did not consider himself a collector, and he had an unusually large number of literary people in the circle of his friendship, so that his was a peculiar case. On the same principle, perhaps, he should have limited the contents of his delightful library to books given to him by the author, but he was fond of books and I do not believe that he cared much for autographs; he had quite a number of them, but appeared to regard them as mere interesting incidents. As opposed to Hutton Mr. Broadley is so tender of letters written to himself that he says in his preface: "I shall carefully refrain from using any letter which has ever been addressed to me personally."

True, Broadley was referring to the printing of them while Hutton was thinking only of the keeping of them, but so far as their privacy is concerned the principle is practically the same, and the two men simply looked at the question from different points of view.

It would be an extraordinary thing, and in fact an undesirable thing, if all men were in agreement about collecting. A few days ago I read that Lafcadio Hearn's "life-hobby—or *doraku* as the Japanese call it—was the collecting of Japanese pipes, which made a sentimental appeal to him." Pipes of any kind, Japanese or otherwise, seem queer objects of desire and not likely to kindle sentiment in the hearts of most people, but they did in Hearn's and that was enough. It is gratifying to have a new word in the place of that ugly one, "hobby"; "fad" is not much better and lacks dignity. "Doraku" has a more convincing sound, although the obtuse person might imagine that it is something to eat or a new sort of disease. It evidently means a little more than "hobby." Perhaps the collecting of autographs might be

“doraku,” the collecting of “Signers” a “hobby,” and the collecting of Signers’ letters dated in 1776 a “fad.” Doubtless the unhumorous and serious-minded folk who devote their energies to the present-day “doraku” of uplifting humanity, would call it all nonsense.

Provokingly exasperating is the pervasive perversity of people who ought to know better. At a dinner given this winter to a well-known playwright, the guest of honour was moved to tell a tale, one of those merry after-dinner tales we know so well, about a critic who at another dinner given to Sir Gilbert Parker, asked that eminent literary and parliamentary gentleman for his autograph on a card. “What!” said the dramatist to the critic, “you are not collecting autographs at your time of life!” The point of the side-splitting story was that the critic replied that he had to make a speech and wished to be able to say that he had read something Sir Gilbert had written. But to me the real point was that the writer of plays considered it to be a matter of course that the collector of autographs must

be a juvenile person, not beyond the years of indiscretion. He was thinking again of the signature collector, whose accumulations bear about the same relation to a veritable collection as a baby's picture-blocks bear to the contents of the Pitti Palace or of the Louvre before it lost the *Mona Lisa*; I will not say, as the latest play by Augustus Thomas to a drama of Shakespeare, for that would seem ill-natured.

Even educated persons often know little and care less about autographs. A well-known Boston collector told me of an accomplished lady who said to him that she "wanted so much to look at his *book of autographs*." He has one hundred and sixty-five volumes of them; she thought he had an album! Some months ago a clever and manifestly intelligent young man representing one of our leading journals called upon me for the declared purpose of finding out what one of my autographs was my particular favourite, the newspaper readers of the metropolis having, no doubt, an inexplicable yearning for that important bit of information. "That is

a difficult question to answer," I timidly ventured to say. "If you want to know which one I longest sought, which one gave me the most anxiety and perturbation of spirit, the most troublesome in the procuring, which one caused the greatest diminution in the amount of my bank-balance—I will tell you, but in all probability you will not be able to tell me who the man was. It was the autograph of Button Gwinnett." His countenance assumed a blank expression as he said, "I never heard of him."

To the collector it brought back the old story of the man on the railway train who insisted upon talking to a surly and uncommunicative stranger about Grant when that distinguished soldier was occupying the White House. "Grant! Who's Grant?" growled the stranger. "Why, the President." "President of *what*?" "President of the United States." "Oh." Yet why should the juvenile reporter, a young man of the present, know anything of Button Gwinnett? It was almost an accident that he signed the Declaration of Independence; and in less than a

year afterwards he fell a victim to the pistol of his fellow-Georgian, Lachlan McIntosh. It seems strange nevertheless that in his forty-five years of life he left so few written evidences of his existence. He was a merchant in Bristol, England, and was engaged in business in Savannah. He filled several important official positions. Yet there is no holograph letter of his in existence, so far as I know. I fondly believe that somewhere in the regions of the South unexplored by Elliott Danforth or other keen sportsmen, there may yet be found some documents at least to reward the huntsman and to bring down many points the market value of my poor little signature.

CHAPTER VI

PRIVATE VENDORS AND THEIR WAYS

Troubles with Private Vendors—Their Peculiarities—A L. S. and L.S.—Collecting Fosters the Virtues—Rogers's Collection—Contentment of Collectors—Their Patience—C. De F. Burns and his Ways—Covetousness—Feminine Collectors—Faith and Hope.

I AM extremely averse to the giving of unsolicited advice; a lawyer usually is, because he expects not only that his counsel will be asked if it is wanted, but that it will be paid for. Yet I cannot refrain from advising the autograph collector, if he values his time and his peace of mind, to keep his "doraku" a secret from the world, disclosing it only to intimate friends or to those trusted dealers who minister to his cravings. If his mania becomes known to mankind at large or at least to that considerable fraction which reads the newspapers, he will be beset by

hordes of people who possess what they fondly regard as gems of purest ray serene but who are willing to dispose of them—for a price. As a rule this price would be high for even a holograph letter of Shakespeare or for the original marriage contract of Adam and Eve. Most of these would-be vendors have had their imaginations aroused by finding in the newspapers occasional chronicles of sales of autographs for enormous sums, and really believe that the autograph of a person whose name is familiar to the world must necessarily be more valuable than that of a man not so famous; they would be surprised to learn what Mr. Benjamin lately disclosed to the *Sun* and which I found out by personal experience, that a letter of Mr. Alfred Moore, an obscure Justice of the Supreme Court at the close of the eighteenth century, commands ten times the price of a fairly good letter of Chief Justice Marshall. Indeed, to advert to the odious matter of cost, I paid a larger sum for my Moore letter than I did for the autographs of all the Justices and Chief Justices of the Court

from John Jay to Brewer, and there were some choice letters among them too.

I heard lately of a Boston lady who had a letter of Oliver Wendell Holmes—the Autocrat, not the Judge—for which she wanted the modest sum of three hundred dollars! In the majority of such cases of amusing overvaluation, the parties are acting in entire good faith. But a few weeks ago a lady wrote to me offering to dispose of what she manifestly deemed to be precious relics—a White House card with the signature of Grover Cleveland and another with that of Mrs. Cleveland. To her they were worth a great deal, and I scarcely had the heart to tell her that they would be dear at a dollar apiece; in fact it would be almost extravagant to pay that much for them. To private collectors such offers are mere nuisances, and the unfortunate individual who accidentally becomes the victim of them is wise if he has a set of cards printed to be sent to applicants, declining to consider their proposals.

Another reason why the inexperienced collector should be cautious about the private

vendor is, that as a rule those vendors are wholly unable to distinguish between a full autograph letter and a mere "letter signed." It is often extremely difficult for even an expert to decide. The letter of John Hart, the New Jersey Signer, which I have in my own collection is the one reproduced in facsimile in Brotherhead's book, but it is there called "A.L.S.," which I hope it is—although I am in doubt about it, and so was the conscientious dealer from whom I procured it. Hart had a secretary who wrote very much like him, and a comparison of the signature, which is genuine beyond dispute, and the body of the letter indicates some differences which make one suspect that the secretary is responsible for all but the signature. Almost every one knows that many letters which pass for those of Washington were really written by his aids, who, consciously or unconsciously, imitated the General's bold and flowing chirography. One of these letters was offered to me very lately, by a lady—the ladies seem to have a virtual monopoly of that sort of business—who sincerely believed that she was the pos-

essor of a full autograph war letter; but she was utterly mistaken. Reputable dealers will not be thus misled nor will they mislead their customers. Hence I obtrude another bit of unsolicited advice—beware of the private vendor!

As I was about to say, when I was interrupted by a gentleman who has a veritable signature of Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, which he is willing to part with for a consideration, the amount whereof would be large for even a Kate Greenaway or an Oscar Wilde (which for some occult reason command stupendous prices just now), I verily believe that the pursuit of autographs encourages and develops most of the important virtues. I have been told by one of those benefactors of the human race, a frank friend, that the truly great do not collect them, at least in modern times. When I cite Mr. Morgan, I am assured that, strictly speaking, he is not a mere autograph collector, but collects everything that is worthy in books, pictures, tapestries, all sorts of art treasures, and occasionally banks and railways; he buys very rare manuscripts as he

buys Coptic records, and delights not in the cheaper things which so often bring gladness to the heart of us comparative paupers. When I ponder over it I am not sure that the frank friend is altogether wrong. True, we have had Doctor Sprague and Bishop Hurst, excellent divines; Doctor Emmet, our Nestor; and, as we have seen, we numbered in our ranks the genial gentleman who wrote "I Wandered by the Brookside," and who was referred to by Sir George Trevelyan as

He whom men call Baron Houghton
But the gods call Dicky Milnes.

I recall that Sir Leslie Stephen when visiting this country in the early days of the rebellion was profoundly disgusted with the Honourable William H. Seward because when Stephen was talking of "Mr. Mill"—John Stuart Mill—Seward thought he was speaking of "Mr. Milnes." I am silly enough to prefer talking about Dicky Milnes to discussing that object of my personal hostility, the professional philosopher.

Then we have Samuel Rogers, of whose

collection a pleasant reminiscence may be found in William Allen Butler's *Retrospect of Forty Years*, recently published. Mr. Butler tells us of the banker-poet's "splendid three-page letter of Washington to Hamilton written when he was deliberating whether to serve the second presidential term." In these days he would not deliberate even about a third term, but would take without hesitation as many cups of coffee as the pot would hold. There were also letters of Mozart, of Charles James Fox, Byron and Scott, and indeed of most of Rogers's "illustrious contemporaries," as well as a part of the manuscript of *Waverly*; truly "a rare collection," as Mr. Butler calls it.

Still, without argument or disputatious contention, let us concede that men of conspicuous strength, originality, and intellectual force do not "collect autographs." The occupation is a promoter of contentment, a commendable virtue, although somewhat out of fashion. A discontented man can never be a good autograph collector, and almost every one now seems to be discontented about something. Large numbers of people who would ordinarily

be quite well satisfied with their condition and circumstances are in the way of being stirred up by trouble-finders who are looking for trouble—and offices. I think it is creditable to the tribe that no autograph collector, as far as I can remember, ever effected an alleged “reform” or headed a sanguinary revolution. The collector is a peaceful, contemplative person, as one must be who studies his letters and manuscripts and reflects upon all the toil, strife, and struggles of the men who wrote the pages over which he pores, and upon the futility of most of their strivings. How excited they became over what, if in their present state they take cognisance of mundane things, they must now regard as trivial and insignificant. In reading of some of the disputes and squabbles whose existence is revealed in the old letters of statesmen and of authors, one thinks of the famous quatrain attributed to a tired mother:

The cow is in the hammock,
The calf is in the lake,
The baby 's in the garbage-can,
What difference does it make?

I once quoted those lines to a foreigner disposed to pessimism, and he remarked with the bland and pitying smile of a foreigner engaged in wrestling with an example of American humour, "Vot vas the baby doing in the garbage-can?" When Martin Van Buren wrote that Autobiography never yet printed, the manuscript of which rests placidly in the Congressional Library, and which, like most autobiographies, was never finished, he devoted long and dreary pages to the disputes between him and Louis McLane, which are indescribably tedious to readers of this generation, few of whom have the most remote idea of who Louis McLane was, and all of whom would find the quarrels of politicians eighty or more years ago as uninteresting as an old Patent Office Report.

It cannot fail to foster a spirit of contentment in our own bosoms when we observe the anger which often disturbs celestial minds, and we congratulate ourselves that their woes are not ours and perceive that at the most those woes were not of much consequence. The most amusing of all are the wailings of

disappointed politicians; some lamentations are mildly pathetic, like the records of the pecuniary distresses of Thomas De Quincey, from whose letters one may infer that he knew a great deal more about financial affairs than his friends supposed. By reading two or three of them I have been led to believe that his sublime ignorance of money matters might have been in some degree affected—for a purpose, not so sinister or contemptible as that of Harold Skimpole, but of a similar nature.

Another virtue fostered by autograph collecting is that of patience. It is a soul-trying experience to wait for months—nay, years—to find a satisfactory letter of a person needed to make a “set” complete; to come upon the description of one in a London catalogue, for example; to order it forthwith by mail, cable messages being somewhat expensive for the ordinary collector, and to receive some weeks later the announcement beginning like so many of the British-Boer war despatches, “We regret to inform you,” etc., etc. Gone! We feel sorry that we

cannot look that purchaser in the eye and tell him—well, as Dr. Francis Landey Patton euphemistically expressed it on a recent occasion, address to him “a peremptory command about his destiny.” But we only sigh regretfully and reflect that we should have cabled; and begin again the patient search of lists and catalogues. In days gone by I was often tempted to indulge in deplorable invective because of the rigorous principles of my much esteemed friend, the late Charles De Forest Burns, who was a skilled buyer in the time when Plancus was Consul, and when I was devoting more attention to the works, prosaic and poetic, of the friends of Consul Plancus than to the subject of autographs. Mr. Burns was a severe critic, and made it a rule never to buy, as principal or agent, any autograph that was (a) in bad condition, (b) of doubtful authenticity, or (c) “run up” to a price higher than he, Burns, thought was fair and just, and his ideas of prices were formed before the cost of autographs had gone up in sympathy with the cost of living. To him a Thomas Lynch, Jr., signature was dear at

\$100 and the fact that some dealer asked \$400 for it, and that there were those who ought to be glad to get it at that price, did not affect his opinion in the slightest degree. The stern, honest old Roman would growl when his reasonable bid was exceeded, but he was inflexible. Many a time and oft I have received from him the message, "It was not in good condition and it went at an absurdly high price"; and so I lost it, whatever it was, although I had established no limit, and I would murmur, with a faint recollection of schoolday tasks, "*Quousque tandem, Catalina,*" with something about "*patientia nostra.*" But one felt that the veteran could always be trusted, and our trust in our fellow-man, like almost all the other trusts, seems to be in danger of being utterly destroyed nowadays.

There may be some slight foundation for the charge that the collector occasionally lapses into the sin of covetousness. It is not envy. When we find that the unpleasant character known as "another"—the one whom the object of our youthful affections usually

loves in preference to ourselves—possesses the letter or manuscript we long to call our own, we do not envy him, but we cannot help coveting his treasure. It is not, however, that odious form of covetousness which leads men to slay and to rob. I have coveted exceedingly some of the fine things in the British Museum, but not to the extent of wishing to destroy the Museum or even to break the glass in its windows—a manifestation of uncontrollable desideration permitted only to “the female of the species.” This reminds me of the rarity of feminine autograph collectors; they exist, but there are not many of them. Perhaps if they had more autographs they would not be so crazy about voting. I fear that if they finally obtain the glorious privilege of going to the polls and putting in their ballots with those of Micky and Giuseppe and Sambo, not to speak of Biddy and Topsy and Maria Lucia, they may feel about it as I sometimes do after acquiring a long-sought-for autograph, that it is not after all such a wonderful thing as I thought it was, and that there are multitudes of other things more

worth having. In boyhood I yearned much for cream-cakes, and once, on receiving from an opulent and generous uncle an unexpected half-dollar, I immediately expended the entire amount of my fortune in the purchase of cream-cakes. Thereafter, for a considerable period of time, I abhorred the very sight of a cream-cake. Possibly it may be so with the suffragists.

But it is better to stray back to the more attractive subject of virtues; to most people, except "Progressive" and peripatetic orators, it is pleasanter to talk about virtues than about vices. The collector is distinguished for faith, hope, and charity. Sometimes his faith is so great that he will accept a specimen bearing a date some years after that of the demise of the individual who is credited with its authorship. Most of us can boast of examples of such posthumous activity. Carlyle once wrote of a letter ascribed to Frederick the Great, "I know abundantly little of Frederick's autograph signature, but this cannot be his, being dated about ten years after his death." I can point to some which

on their face purport to have been written some years before the birth of their putative parent. Hope, which springs eternal in the collector's breast, fondly cherished although often unfulfilled, is familiar to us. We have charity for all, even for those who write to us from divers quarters of the habitable globe offering gems of great price, such as "franks" of British noblemen, authentic signatures of Mr. and Mrs. Grover Cleveland actually penned at the White House, holograph letters of Washington written by aides-de-camp, and albums adorned by the chirography of Congressmen. We are careful to answer all these communications and waste our surplus in paying postage, and are often more than repaid for our trouble by the generous acts of others, as, in my case, when the distinguished and kindly New York banker with his own hands delivered to me a beautiful manuscript of Rudyard Kipling, which would be an ornament to any collection. Such an act of beneficence makes up for all the time and trouble devoted to inconsequential correspondence.

Apropos of blind faith, I lately bought an

inkstand said to have belonged to General Burgoyne and to Daniel Webster, together with a quill pen used by the godlike Daniel, merely because the vendor informed me that the tale was true; and even the fact that the quill manifestly came from a bird of extremely modern origin has not shaken my confidence—in the inkstand. But why should he have lugged in Webster? The inkstand looks as if it might have been the property of Julius Cæsar, and the seller might have added the assurance that the goose was one of the immortal flock which saved the Capitol.

CHAPTER VII

COLLECTORS AND THEIR METHODS

Courtesy to Collectors—Miss Braddon—Longfellow—Holmes—Bryant—Napier of Magdala—Mrs. Fields—Bryan Waller Procter—Robert Southey—Rideing's Story about John Watson—Gladstone and Robert G. Ingersoll—Laurence Hutton and his Characteristics.

REPREHENSIBLE though it may be to write to eminent persons for their autographs, yet the practice is not wholly without benefit; for occasionally it induces a revelation of the true character of the recipient. Some men are impatient and fretful at such requests, some are pleased—considering them as testimonials to their greatness—and some are so kindly by nature that they are willing to suffer inconvenience in order not to give offence or wound the feelings of others. I have cited elsewhere some examples of the divers forms of reply proceeding from dis-

tinguished individuals—Stevenson, Kipling, Froude, Horace Mann, Lord Rosebery, George F. Watts, and others, and shall not reproduce them.

Miss Braddon, once famous but not well-remembered now, writes rather gracefully and she certainly “aimed to please.” She said:

DEAR SIR:—The kindly enthusiasm of my American readers brings me so many applications for autographs that you must please to forgive my long neglect of your letters. Your perseverance under discouragement certainly deserves the poor reward of these few lines. Nothing in my literary career has been more pleasing to me than the recognition of the American public. I trust I may live to see your vast and most interesting country.

Very truly yours—

M. E. BRADDON

RICHMOND.

ENGLAND.

April 15, 1875.

Mr. Broadley quotes several of my illustrations of the rule which seems to prevail—the greater the man, the greater the gentleness and courtesy. The innate graciousness of Longfellow and of Holmes in the matter of autographs has been referred to; I am sorry

that Lowell was so surly about it. This surliness goes to show why Lowell was the object of admiration rather than of affection, and why even those who know the men only by their writings become personally fond of Holmes and Longfellow but not of James Russell Lowell.

Whatever may be the contemporary estimate of Longfellow as a poet, it cannot be denied that his character as a man remains a precious possession of his countrymen. He was most indulgent towards the throng of bores which beset him without mercy. The applicants for autographs were never repulsed, but were promptly answered with an enclosed signature, "already prepared in advance in a moment of leisure." To some of the most inconsiderate he often sent a slip which he had caused to be printed for the benefit of the careless, giving them a piece of advice which one not familiar with the ways of the autograph hunter would scarcely think necessary. "In applying for an autograph, always enclose an addressed and stamped envelope." It is related of him that "for

hours of a morning he would be at his table writing scores of autographs for far-away strangers." In his Journal under the date of January 9, 1857, he writes: "Yesterday I wrote, sealed, and directed seventy autographs. To-day I added five or six more and mailed them." "Such patience," well says one of his biographers, "might spring in part from fondness for even indiscriminating admiration; but it arose still more from unfailing benignity of nature. Why should people wish to see him, or have his autograph, except to add a pleasure to their lives? The pleasure was granted in every case that was at all reasonable."

He tells of one letter from a person wholly unknown to him, which he would not answer; and silence was surely the most charitable response. The applicant said:

Now I want you to write me a few lines for a young lady's album, to be written as an Acrostic to read *My Dearest One*. If you will please imagine yourself a young man loving a beautiful young lady, who has promised to be his wife, and then write as you would for yourself, you will much oblige one who has been an ardent admirer of your poems.

The postscript to this modest request was, "Send bill."

The Autocrat was another victim of correspondents. "It was not simply the swarming autograph hunters, like mosquitoes rising from the limitless breeding-grounds of summer marshes," says Mr. Morse, with that rhetorical exuberance which second-class people are so fond of pouring forth when they deal with the tribe; so that there were other and more burdensome petitions to try the temper of the good Doctor. Mr. Morse adds:

No album or collection of autographs went without his signature; he said once that if it should retain any value at all, at least it would be the cheapest autograph on the dealers' catalogues. James Russell Lowell, who pursued a different plan, grumbled at him because Holmes's amiable ways made it so hard for the others.

Morse was manifestly thinking only of the signature seeker, and the Doctor was mistaken about the money value of his autograph, which is always considerable. When Holmes was seventy-eight he wrote to Mr. DeWolfe Howe:

I am what my friends the autograph hunters called a "noted person," sometimes perhaps "notorious," but I am not quite sure of this. They also remind me that I am advanced in life and not likely to be good for autographs much longer, so that it would be the civil thing in me to hurry up my signature before it is too late.

This was of course, a bit of humorous exaggeration; for so tender was he of the "autograph hunters" that he not only furnished his own cheerfully, but actually helped them to obtain the autographs of others, as appears from one of the letters of which I am fondest—given in full in one of my works of great learning but of limited circulation. I am tempted to quote it again, in the hope that now some one may read it:

BEVERLY FARMS, MASS., August 21, 1879.

MY DEAR LONGFELLOW:—

I send you a letter of Mr. Frederick Locker with a request which I know you will comply with. The daughter he refers to, as you may remember, married Tennyson's son. If you would have the kindness, after writing the lines marked for yourself, to send the whole, letter and all, to Emerson, he to Whittier, and Whittier to me, I should feel in sending back the manuscript that I had made Mr. Locker happy;

and that I should be glad to do for he has shown me much kindness, though I have never seen him. I cannot help the fact that his letter has a few complimentary words about myself—you can skip those, if you will read the rest.

Always faithfully yours,
O. W. HOLMES.

Doctor Holmes could not have written the *Commemoration Ode* or the *Biglow Papers*, the latter now so nearly forgotten; but Lowell could never have written that letter, for the warmth of it did not lie in his heart.

Dr. Holmes's readiness to assist others in procuring autographs recalls a letter of another American poet which I am fortunate enough to possess. On June 27, 1843, Bryant wrote to Israel K. Tefft, one of the pioneer collectors in this country:

I was diligent in looking up Professor Robinson on my return to New York that I might secure the autograph of Luther for you, but he had already disposed of it. It was a paper which contained the handwriting both of Luther and Melancthon. He said, however, that he would look up for me the autographs of several eminent modern German scholars which he possessed and give them to me for you. I accepted

his offer of course, and last evening I called in hopes of getting the autographs, but he was not in, and Mrs. Robinson told me that he had been too busy to look for them. I hope to have the pleasure of forwarding them to you hereafter.

The only autograph of Luther I have ever seen was, strangely enough, in the Vatican.

Even a distinguished soldier does not disdain to be helpful, as is shown by a brief note from Baron Napier of Magdala. I am curious to know what particular autograph he had in mind, but do not see how it may ever be revealed to me.

8 SEVILLE STREET.
LOWNDES SQUARE S.W.
December 17th.

DEAR SIR—

I send you for your collection an autograph which is not too plentiful even with us.

Yours very faithfully,
NAPIER OF MAGDALA

But kindness is sometimes grossly abused. I once saw a letter of Hawthorne in which he said some indignant things about applications to him for letters written to him by men of

importance, and Mrs. James T. Fields writes with ill-concealed irritation:

MY DEAR SIR:

I am sorry to say that I cannot give away any letters. Believe me

Very truly,
A. FIELDS

148 CHARLES STREET.
BOSTON, April 14th.

Such gifts must not be solicited; they must be voluntary benefactions. I do not know of a more generous one than that which is recorded of Bryan Waller Procter to an American friend. Procter was talking with him about Charles Lamb, while looking over some Lamb letters. Selecting one, Procter said, "I will give you this one. Cram it in your pocket, for I hear my wife coming down-stairs, and perhaps she won't let you carry it off."

Robert Southey, one of the most lovable of all men of letters, an indefatigable worker, most economical of his time, always found opportunity to attend to his correspondence, as the busiest men usually do. It is generally

the idle who have "no time to write." He advocated playfully the forming of a "Society for the Suppression of Albums," a laudable enterprise; but when a certain Mr. Samuel Simpson of Liverpool begged from him a few lines in his handwriting "to fill a vacancy in his collection of autographs, without which his series must remain for ever most incomplete," he answered merrily in verse which must have won the heart of Simpson:

Inasmuch as you, Sam, a descendant of Sim,
For collecting handwritings have taken a whim,
And to me, Robert Southey, petition have made,
In a civil and nicely-penned letter—post-paid—
That I to your album so gracious would be
As to fill up a page there appointed for me,
Five couplets I send you, by aid of the Nine—
They will cost you in postage a penny a line:
At Keswick, October the sixth, they were done,
One thousand eight hundred and twenty and one.

It is instructive to observe the contrast between the men of might and the lesser figures in the world of literature: the loudest grumbling, the most plaintive wails, proceed from the lower ranks when it is a question of autographs. They appear to fancy that it is

a smart thing to sneer at a collector. I found an example lately in a book called *Many Celebrities and a Few Others* by Mr. William H. Rideing, a worthy purveyor of common-places for magazines, in which he favours us with a tale told to him by Mr. John Watson concerning a silly young man who stared at Watson on a steamer. He makes Watson say that the youth was either a reader of the Ian Maclaren books "or an autograph hunter. He can wait. They are always with us, like the poor." I refuse to believe that Watson ever said it: he would not have repeated that weak, wretched, worn-out jest about "the poor." That arrow never came out of Ian Maclaren's quiver; it is manifestly the product of Mr. Rideing's genius. I am emboldened in my scepticism by a little evidence from another chapter of the book, devoted to an exposition of the author's intimacy with Gladstone. Referring to a discussion of Christianity between Gladstone and Robert Ingersoll, in the *North American Review*, Mr. Rideing makes Gladstone say to him in an alleged familiar conversation: "I wish I had

not written that article on Mr. Ingersoll. I feel as if I had had a tussle with a chimney-sweep." As a matter of fact, Mr. Gladstone once wrote a letter to Mr. Rideing, who had some editorial connection with the *North American Review*, dated in London, July 23, 1888, in which he said:

In considering your letter I have thought that a note such as the inclosed would answer your purpose and would be my best mode of action. I could not indeed well go beyond it, for I feel that there is something of the same objection to a literary contact with Col. Ingersoll as to a scuffle with a chimney sweep.

I doubt whether Mr. Gladstone was guilty of such a parrot-like repetition of the same idea; of course, it may be like the "huma" incident related by the Autocrat; but I think Mr. Rideing was recalling his letter and not a conversation. I have the letter, for Mr. Rideing sold his letters from time to time.

Mr. Gladstone wrote as he did of Ingersoll without accurate knowledge; he was deceived by some slave of prejudice. I knew Colonel Ingersoll; and while I have no sympathy with the views which he proclaimed in regard to

religion and to Christianity, I always found him a charming man, of attractive personal qualities, and I had many opportunities of judging. I doubt if any one could have been long in his society without having an affection for him. He was a poet by nature; he was a real orator; he had an abundant sense of humour. In all these respects he was Gladstone's superior. I have always believed that, although he was execrated by the "unco' guid" as a blatant infidel, he thought more deeply and more constantly on religious topics than the vast majority of his critics.

There lives more faith in honest doubt,
Believe me, than in half the creeds."

Some reference has been made to Laurence Hutton and the peculiar views he entertained or professed to entertain regarding autographs. After his lamented death eight years ago, a book was published, dictated by him in the latter part of his life, entitled *Talks in a Library with Laurence Hutton*, one chapter of which is devoted to Autographs. Hutton was a genial man, with many amiable qualities,

but even those who knew him best must admit that he was profoundly self-centred; his egotism however was more amusing than offensive. It permeated all that he wrote; events were important if they happened to *him*, and men were of importance if *he* knew them. The Hutton *motif* is always dominant; his family, his friends, his dogs, his belongings were always in the foreground. He begins his autographic disquisitions with *dicta* which I have often heard him deliver orally:

“Autographisers,” as Dibdin once, and a little disrespectfully, spoke of them, may be divided into four distinct classes—the Buyers, the Beggars, the Stealers, and the Receivers. The first study the catalogues; they order by mail or by wire; sometimes they exchange, and they always pay full prices. They find profit and, no doubt, a certain amount of pleasure in their hunting and angling for letters and signatures. They bag their game, and they catch their fish, ready cooked. It is often the rarest of fish and game. But it is not sport.

This is pretty thin. Inasmuch as he, later on, excoriates Beggars and Stealers, it follows that it is only the “Receivers,” as he calls them, who enjoy real sport. I wonder what



Laurence Hutton

From a painting from life by Dora Wheeler Keith

he meant by "sport"; an analysis of his sage expressions indicates that it depends merely on whether the game was "cooked" or raw. But what "sport" do the "Receivers" enjoy? If a man whom you know well sends you an agreeable letter, voluntarily and without solicitation, where is the "sport?" To pursue the hunting analogy, there is about as much sport in it as there would be if a "lusty trout" should leap from the pool and deposit himself in your basket, or if a "lordly lion" should stalk into your camp, recline peacefully at your feet, and signify that he was your personal property.

The Huttonian point of view is revealed in his next paragraph:

The real collector would not exchange a little note in his possession, written on the night of his election to the Century Club, containing the simple words, "Dear Mother Blank, your Boy is a Centurion," and signed "Edwin" (Booth), for the manuscript of Washington's Farewell Address; nor would he give a familiar letter of Bunner's full of affectionate personalities and closing "with love, as always, to the Wife," for the sealed and signed Death Warrant of Lady Jane Grey.

You might as well say that "a real collector" of portraits would not exchange a portrait of his mother for one of a great statesman by Sir Joshua Reynolds. It is all the Hutton way of telling us that Booth wrote a letter about him and that Bunner wrote a letter to him. He seems to have no idea at all of the true emotions of a collector. He had no adequate sense of proportion, but a good deal of harmless personal vanity. I do not know what connection there can be between Lady Jane Grey's Death Warrant and a letter from Mr. Bunner, but I should think that any rational person would prefer owning the Death Warrant to the proprietorship of a Bunner letter even if it was written to Laurence Hutton.

But really, he did not believe all this; he may have thought that he did, but in his heart he knew that it was only twaddle.

For in what I have written here of Hutton, I do not intend by any means to utter words of disparagement; far from it. All men have their little vanities, but some hide them better than others. He enjoyed keenly the delights

that it likes for is all I care. But, when
 in the third paragraph of page 234 that I
 or the printers, have used free made up
 with free words, and make free words do what
free man did. Sticking the average critic does
 not know enough of the man, or the man, or
 of Oxford, to see the difference - he corrects
 a later edition - if these things could, other-
 wise he would use me on a carpet sweepers
 : with his journalistic floor.

We hope to re-
 vocation again by mid-July.
 Faithfully,
 Laurence Hutton.

of good books, good art, good talk, and all that gratifies a cultured taste; but he would prize a snap-shot photograph of himself taken by some amateur crony much more than a portrait by Sargent, if he did not know Sargent very well. He had pride in his acquaintance with men of distinction; so much pride that he often gave the impression of having a sort of ownership of them. There was something very winning in his appreciation of their kind words and friendly acts. This spirit of affectionate regard was so strong within him that he could not keep it from dominating his thoughts; and hence it was that he failed to comprehend the true passion of the collector and suffered the personal element to overshadow it completely. Most men have a reluctance about displaying, in a collection of autographs, an intimate personal letter addressed to themselves; it seems almost too sacred to be treated in such a quasi-public way. But there are so many varying opinions on such subjects that no hard and fast rule may be formulated.

CHAPTER VIII

MY OWN COLLECTION

The Collection—Some Poets' Autographs—Thomas Gray's Manuscript—Charles Lloyd—His Letter to Southey—His Marriage—A Byron Manuscript—Letter of Byron's Mother—Beattie—Edward Lear—Locker-Lampson—Thomas Hood—Robert Southey—Matthew Prior—Christina Rossetti—Tennyson to Bayard Taylor—Shelley—Bryan Waller Procter—Samuel Rogers.

As I confidently expected from the beginning, I come to my own collection at last. I did my best to avoid it and hovered about it a little, but could not escape from it. The collector cannot refrain from gossiping about it any more than a modern statesman can abstain from talking about the infallible judgment of the people or than a philanthropic millionaire can cease from talking about himself. We all have our objects of idolatry, but we may indulge in the hope that we may discover when we are growing tiresome,



MR. GRAY.

Thomas Gray

From the engraving by T. Basire

although it is easy to be deceived on such a subject and I doubt whether a bore ever really finds out that he *is* a bore. Without pouring out the contents of many portfolios, we may look at a few, and they are neither the rarest nor the most important; and after all, if any one does not care to follow me in my rambles, the way of escape is open to him.

In the "Poets' Corner" reposes a manuscript of Thomas Gray, containing two short poems; and Horace Walpole has written at the top, "The following two poems were given to Mr. Jacob by (Miss Speed) Comtesse de Virri, who told him they [were] written by Mr. Gray." Miss Harriet Speed is remembered by students of Gray as the woman who furnished "the sole suggestion of romance in Gray's life."¹ The acquaintance began in this wise: Walpole showed to Lady Cobham, who lived at Stoke Manor House, the manuscript of the *Elegy* and she persuaded her

¹ "At one time," says Mr. Gosse, "Gray seems to have been really frightened lest they should marry him suddenly, against his will," to Miss Speed, "and perhaps he almost wished they would."

niece, Miss Speed, and a Mrs. Schaub to visit Gray at his mother's home near by. As he was absent at the moment of their call they left a note for him which led to the somewhat mediocre poem called *The Long Story*. When Lady Cobham died in 1760 she left £20 to Gray for a mourning ring and £30,000 to Miss Speed. According to Sir Leslie Stephen, "some vague rumours, which however Gray mentions with indifference, pointed to a match between the poet and the heiress"; but in January, 1761, when nearly forty, "the heiress" married a man ten years her junior, the Baron de la Peyrière, a son of the Sardinian minister, and went to the family estate of Viry, on Lake Geneva, ultimately attaining the title of Comtesse de Viry. She died in 1783, twelve years after Gray's death, and was said to have been "eminent for her wit and accomplishments."

These poems, which are in Gray's unmistakable handwriting, were not included in any collection published in his lifetime, nor in the Wakefield edition of 1786; but they appear in the edition of John Mitford. The Pickering

reprint of Mitford asserts that the originals were given by the Countess to the Rev. Mr. Leman of Suffolk while he was on a visit at her castle in Savoy, and Mr. Gosse follows this statement, but I think that Walpole's inscription is a better authority. Perhaps there were duplicate originals.

The first of the poems was written at Miss Speed's request, to an old air of Geminiani, the thought taken from the French. The version in the Mitford edition is printed from the copy which appeared in Walpole's Letters to the Countess of Ailesbury. A different version is given in Park's edition, and neither rendering corresponds exactly with the manuscript. The verses read as follows:

I.

Thyrsis when he left me, swore
E'er the spring he would return.
Ah! what means yon opening flower
And the bird that decks the thorn?
'Twas the lark that upward sprung,
'Twas the nightingale that sung.

2.

Idle notes, untimely green!
Why such unavailing haste?
Gentle gales and skies serene
Prove not always winter past.
Cease my doubts, my fears to move,
Spare the honour of my Love.

The Pickering copy varies from the original in six places: we have "when we parted" in the first line; "ere" for "e'er"—a correction; "*violet* flower" instead of "opening flower"; "*this* unavailing haste"; "western" not "gentle" gales; "speak" in place of "prove." The Park copy is more accurate, having only three variations: "in" for "e'er," "sky serene," and the last two lines of the first verse are transposed. These are trifling things, but they lead us to think that editors are not always to be trusted. Mitford (or was it Walpole?) did not improve the poem.

The other poem is given by Mitford exactly as it was written. In the edition printed by T. Bensley in 1800 it is headed: "The following lines, which have never yet appeared in any collection of Gray's poems, deserve to be

The following two poems were given to me by [Miss] Constance, who told him they written by Mr Gray.

Thyestes when he left me swore
For the spring he would return;
Ah! what means your opening flower
And the bud that decks the thorn?
'Twas the lark that upward sprang,
'Twas the nightingale that sung.

²
Idle notes, untimely green!
What such unavailing haste?
Gentle gales & skies serene
Prove not always winter's guest.
Cease my doubts, my fears to move,
Spare the honour of my Love -

With beauty with pleasure surrounded to languish,
To weep without knowing the cause of my anguish;
To start from short slumbers & wish for the morning
To close my dull eyes when I see it returning;
²

Sighs sudden & frequent, looks ever dejected,
Words that steal from my tongue by no meaning connected.
Ah! say, ye gods! I pray, how these symptoms befall me?
They would but reply not - sure Delia will tell me

considered as a literary curiosity, since they are the only amatory verses written by our Pindaric bard." This gives colour to the "vague rumours" of the tender feeling of the cold and bashful poet towards the future Countess of Viry.

With beauty with pleasure surrounded to languish,
To weep without knowing the cause of my anguish;
To start from short slumbers, and wish for the morning,
To close my dull eyes when I see it returning;
Sighs sudden and frequent, looks ever dejected;
Words that steal from my tongue, by no meaning
connected,
Ah! say, fellow swains how these symptoms befell me?
They smile but reply not—sure Delia will tell me.

The 1800 edition says "Delia *can* tell me." If this was the best Gray could do in the amatory line, he was wise to make no more attempts, and we cannot wonder that Miss Speed hastened to the arms of her Baron from Savoy.¹ The "Pindaric bard" was manifestly more at home in a churchyard than in the courts of Love; "sure" Delia could not have told him. Justice to Gray requires us

¹ As Whitwell Elmo says of it, "It might have been written by an anchorite."

to emphasise the fact that neither of these rather feeble effusions was sent out into the world by his procurement or with his approval.¹

Charles Lloyd is remembered chiefly because he was the friend of Lamb, Coleridge, Wordsworth, and Southey, and his early poems appeared, with Lamb's, as a sort of postscript to the little book, dear to all Lamb-lovers, entitled *Poems by S. T. Coleridge, Second Edition*. He was indeed a minor poet of the so-called Lake School; but he had many fine qualities and De Quincey said of him that "he was a man never to be forgotten." *Charles Lamb and the Lloyds*, by E. V. Lucas, is an entertaining book, like all those which come from the pen of that accomplished writer. My autograph letter of Lloyd's throws light upon a little old-fashioned English romance. In 1799 Lloyd married Sophia, daughter of Samuel Pemberton of Birmingham. It was a runaway match. Dr. Garnett says in the

¹ As an instance of the increase in prices, it may be recalled that the manuscript of the *Elegy* was sold in 1847 for £100! At the same sale *The Long Story* brought £45 and the *Odes* £10.



Charles Lamb

From an engraving of the painting by Henry Meyer

Dr. Southey,

You were the last person from whom we heard of Dyer, and if you know where to forward the news I now send, to ~~his~~ him, I shall be obliged to you to lose no time. D's sister in Law, who lives in St. Dunstons court wrote to him about three weeks ago to the More Lane Cambridge, to inform him that Squire Houlbert ^{or some such name} of Denmark Hill has died, & left her husband a thousand pounds, ^{and} I two or three hundred to Dyer. Her letter got no answer, and she does not know where to direct to him, so she came to me, who am equally in the dark. Her story is, that Dyer's immediately coming to town ^{now, & signing some papers,} will save him a considerable sum of money: ^I don't understand it; but it is very right he should hear of this. — This has left me barely time for the post; so I conclude with all Love &c. — to all at Reswick.

~~The man~~ Dyer's brother, who by his wife's account has got Love's left hand, is father of the little dirty girl, Dyer's niece & fac-totum.

In haste —

If you send ~~him~~ George this,
Cut off the last paragraph

Yours truly

Chamb.

7 Nov 1804

D's landlady had a letter a few days since; but George never dates.

Dictionary of National Biography that "if De Quincey can be trusted, he eloped with her 'by proxy,' employing no less distinguished a person than Southey to carry her off." I do not believe it. De Quincey, sad to say, is seldom to be trusted; he had such a store of reminiscences of things which never happened. I am glad that Mr. Lucas does not believe it either. He says of the tale: "That, however, probably is not so. One cannot quite see Southey thus engaged." I think my letter justifies this scepticism. It was written to Southey the day of the marriage:

Friday morn.

DEAREST SOUTHEY—

Sophia and I shall be married this morn at 10 o'clock. Mr. P. returned and has behaved with all possible obstinacy. He will not see me and again threatens to disinherit his daughter. This step is therefore hastened to prevent all mischances. We shall set forward for Cumberland either on Sunday or Monday. I am very happy and feel many assurances of comfort. Kindest love to Mrs. Southey and Edith, and also to Tom if he be at home.

Dear Southey, farewell.

C. LLOYD JR.

This is hardly the sort of letter a man would write to one whom he was expecting to do his eloping for him. It is pleasant to know that, whether or not Mr. Pemberton disinherited Sophia, the marriage was a very happy one, clouded only by poor Lloyd's fits of insanity, and even De Quincey, much given to saying disagreeable things about people he knew, testifies to his admiration and respect for brave Mrs. Lloyd, who, he thought, personally resembled Mrs. Jordan, the fascinating.

Byron's fame as a poet has been subjected to vicissitudes, and while one generation exalts him, another decries him unduly. The latter half of the nineteenth century was poetically dull, despite Tennyson, Browning, and Swinburne, and it treated Byron quite contemptuously, but he is coming into his own again; and certainly his autographs have always been much in demand. One of mine is a manuscript containing six stanzas of "Oscar of Alva," a poem included in *Hours of Idleness*. They are written on both sides of a small quarto sheet, and there are many

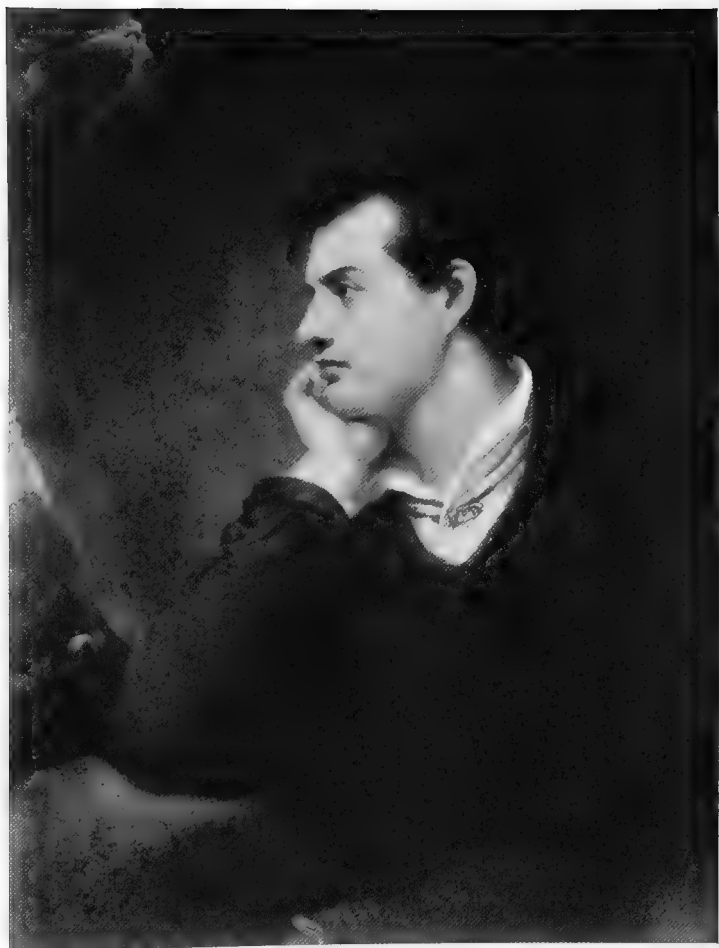
Friday morn
Dear Southey

Sophia and I
shall be married this
morn at 10 o'clock -
Mr P. is returned -
has behaved with all
possible civility -
he will not see me, &
again threaten to dis-
inherit his daughter -
This step is therefore hasten-
ed to prevent all mis-
chances

We shall set ¹⁷
forward for Cumberland
either on Sunday or
Monday - I am very
happy - & feel many
assurances of comfort -
Kindest Love to Mrs
Southey & Edith - &
also to Tom if he be
at home -

dear Southey farewell

C. Lloyd J.



George Gordon, Lord Byron
From a mezzotint

erasure and corrections, whole lines being roughly scored through and rewritten. It is a "shocking bad hand" but by no means illegible. The verses, numbered from 29 to 34 inclusive, appear in print as follows:

29.

"Oh, search, ye chiefs! oh, search around!
Allan, with these, through Alva fly;
Till Oscar, till my son is found,
Haste, haste, nor dare attempt reply."

30.

All is confusion—through the vale,
The name of Oscar hoarsely rings,
It rises on the murm'ring gale,
Till night expands her dusky wings.

31.

It breaks the stillness of the night,
But echoes through her shades in vain;
It sounds through morning's misty light,
But Oscar comes not o'er the plain.

32.

Three days, three sleepless nights, the chief
For Oscar search'd each mountain cave;
Then hope is lost; in boundless grief,
His locks in grey-torn ringlets wave.

33.

"Oscar! my son!—thou God of Heav'n,
Restore the prop of sinking age!
Or, if that hope no more is given,
Yield his assassin to my rage.

34.

"Yes, on some desert rocky shore
My Oscar's whiten'd bones must lie;
Then grant, thou God! I ask no more,
With him his frantic Sire may die!"

This follows the manuscript, except in punctuation; the punctuation of poets is most uncertain. In the last line, Byron wrote "lie" and not "die," and the correction improves the rhyme but not the sense; whether the change was made by the printer or by the author I have no means of deciding. The manuscript is accompanied by a letter from John Murray in which he says: "It is a genuine autograph and might fetch from 2 to 3 guineas at an Auction at Sotheby's." The year of Murray's letter is not given; it evidently proceeded from John Murray the younger, who died in 1892. His estimate of price seems low, when we consider that in

- 1 - 38

All is not confusion, through the night,
 The name of Dear Heavenly King,
 It rings on the morning's bells,
 Till night extends her dusky wing.

I - 9
 But when I ~~thought~~
 I knew the Millers! the night,
 But when I ~~thought~~ he said in
 I said that morning with 1871

1909, at a New York sale, a manuscript of a Byron poem of sixteen lines—"I saw thee weep"—brought two hundred dollars. True to my record, I wholly forget what I paid for mine.

Byron's mother, that much abused lady, was not without pride in her son's work, and she wrote to Mr. James Cawthorn, bookseller, of No. 24 Cockspur Street, London, a letter as follows:

NEWSTEAD ABBEY NEAR NOTTINGHAM.

5th Feby. (1810).

SIR: I wrote to you the 24th or 25th of last month and am surprised that I have received no answer. The purport of my letter was to know whether my son Lord Byron's work "English Bards and Scotch Reviewers" was in the *second* or *third* edition, and to desire you to inform me of all the Reviews, Magazines &c. &c. &c. where it was mentioned, whether abused or praised no matter, I wish to peruse them, for what months they are mentioned in. The only two I have read is the critiques in the Gentlemans Magazine and the Anti-Jacobin for April last. Send an immediate answer.

She was evidently in a hurry as she drew near the close, for her style becomes confused. It may be true that when a school-fellow said

to Byron, "Your mother is a fool," he answered, "I know it"; but he was wrong. She may have been capricious and passionate, but she was no fool.

There is a peculiar pleasure in roving among the poet-portfolios, for although they are filled with much that is of no great interest other than the merely autographic, we discover here and there the little personal touches which bring the writer before us—as when we read what the grave Professor Beattie wrote from Aberdeen in May, 1774, saying in his stately eighteenth-century fashion:

Dr. Johnson was here in autumn last, but I could not attend him, being then detained in England by business. I am happy to hear that the cold and hunger and other calamities which he must of necessity have encountered in his tour have not impaired his health, and that he seriously intends to oblige the world by publishing an account of his travels. The remarks of such a genius on such a country must have in them something very original and extraordinary.

A tour in Scotland and to the Hebrides seems to have been looked upon very much as an expedition to the North Pole is now re-



Your very truly
Thos Hood

Thomas Hood

My dear Ward

I continue better - & the
wind has changed & I have
had my window open - The eyes
are no longer emetic.
What a day for Ascol! - without
any running rain!

You haven't sent the Trager?

I will look over Webster's list
more carefully in the morning.
Most of them, it appears, are
very stale - e.g. Life of Louis
Phillippe - a poor book. I have
had it these 9 months -
Stick the Atlantic is old too
Howells' German book I should
like to do myself.

garded. Then we find something in another vein, as when Edward Lear writes to his friend Miss Perry, *à propos* of some proposed lodgings: "I know that they have, or had, a good French cook; only I also know that she fell and broke her collar bone she did, though that may not have interfered culinarily"; and again, "My Tennyson illustrations don't progress—Lithography and autotype &c &c. all seem to fail,—but I never give anything up while there is hope, as the tadpole said when his tail fell off." Frederick Locker-Lampson writes to Miss Collins, to whom he had given a pair of earrings: "I am very glad you like the earrings. How is it that, your father being a poet, you never had your ears bored?"

From a number of Hood's letters I select one written as he was approaching the end of his sad life, for it shows him with a little jest at the end of his pen, struggling under the burdens of ill-health and the newly founded *Hood's Magazine* which Mr. F. O. Ward, his sub-editor, was faithfully conducting under the supervision of his dying chief.

MY DEAR WARD:—

I continue better and the wind has changed and I have had my window open. The sycamore is no longer emetical. What a day for Ascot!—without any Running Rain!

You have n't sent the Fraser. I will look over Wolesby's list more carefully in the morning. Most of them it appears are very stale—e.g. Life of Louis Phillippe—a poor book. I have had it these 9 months. Slick the attaché is old too. Howitt's *German* book I should like to do myself. Twiss Life of Eldon ought to be a good book, but it is not ready I suspect. I hope Wolesby is not strong Tory. Our actresses I dare say will be sent by Smith & Elder when ready.

I have done three cuts on the wood today and shall send them per boy tomorrow to the wood cutter. Perhaps with some more.

It is funny Wolesby talking of "novelties" with such a list of stale books. Please not to write to Broderip—pro tem.

If Cooper's Ashore and Afloat is new it might do. But I do not see why we should turn Retrospective Reviewers and go back to old wares. My notion is reviews of novelties, with good extracts—for our readers before they can generally get the books thro circulating libraries. I will send George to-morrow for the Fraser.

Dr. Toulmin's verses are weak & come to "a bad end." They certainly will not do. The Mag. has a poetical reputation we must not undermine. A little and good. I am certain that readers are more disgusted by indifferent poetry than by bad prose.

Yours affectionately,

F. O. WARD ESQ.

T. HOOD



*From the original in the possession of
the Rev. Mr. Phillips*

Robert Southey

From an engraving by E. Finden after the painting by T. Phillips, R. A.

In drunken whirl they reel around,
 One drops, another plunges in,
 And sits with oversteering din
 The rainbows & the trumpets round;
 And clasp of hand & shout & song
 From all the multitude arise.
 Which round & round in merry wheel
 Involunt they roll & reel.
 Till one by one they sink in they fall,
 And the devouring flames have swallowed all.

Then all was still; the drums & choruses ceased;
 The multitude were hushed in silent awe;
 Only the roaring of the flames was heard.

Southey may not have been a great poet, but he was in every good sense "a literary man," and he was so fond of his books! So neat and legible was his chirography that it is a delight to me to look over the manuscript of *The Curse of Kehama*, whose introductory lines,

Midnight, and yet no eye
Thro' all the Imperial City clos'd in sleep,

were so amusingly parodied in the lines of *The Rejected Addresses* beginning,

Midnight, and not a nose
From Tower Hill to Piccadilly snored.

It was said of his handwriting that "it is not modern English writing but a modernisation of old English writing." He is dear to us less for the epics of which he was so proud, than for the immortal *Tale of the Three Bears* and the story, so familiar in our childhood, which, when old Kaspar's work was done, the venerable gentleman related to little Peterkin and Wilhelmine, about the "famous victory." There is truth even at this day in this letter

which he wrote to Mr. William Webb, dated at Keswick on November 8, 1824:

The usual course thro which an author's manuscript passes is this [says Southey]: if it be of a nature that the bookseller thinks worth a moment's consideration, he requests some other author of whose judgment he happens to think well to look at it (sometimes the most incompetent person in the world) and acts upon his opinion. The recommendation of one who is a friend of the writer goes for nothing. If you have any friend in London to whom you can entrust this sort of commission, let him take the manuscript to Murray, or any other respectable publisher, & ask as speedy an answer as may be convenient. If you have not, & the manuscript is in your own writing, a more summary way may be to have the first sheet printed in Dublin—for a sheet will be as sufficient a sample as a volume. The idlest person to whom it may be referred will glance over it,—whereas a manuscript if not very legibly written is always regarded with some degree of dismay. You can then enclose your sample in a frank to the publisher-elect, who may then very likely form his own opinion—& is in good manners bound to deliver it without delay. The time and trouble which this method will save, I should think worth the cost. If the bookseller declines the undertaking, you can try others. . . . I like a book in which the writer shows himself to be what he is, & is not ashamed of a little honest egotism. Do not expect too much from it. Public opinion is as little to be relied on in such things as the wind and weather in



Matthew Prior

To his Hon^r the Sec^y of State & others.

Dear Sir

'Twas ridiculous that since your leaving
London I should have consulted my
Self wth asking m^r Folsomian to do you
do, without writing to you, but to let
a letter from you by a week unanswered
is downright Impudent: the Devil
take Me if I am not ashamed of it,
confiteor, est mea culpa, mea maxima
culpa, Rabalais gives you a whole
Chapter of the same stile, when Pan-
=urge in the tempest at once damns
himself, and prays: and now what to
write is the question, my L^d Griffon^{ly}
is reproved for a fortnight, her W^{ch}
is better, and designs for Windsor
next week, the Scotch Prisoners and
most of them, say God and goe home
again: and all public matters are
much in the indifferent situation
in w^{ch} you left them: Lady Sandwich

this uncertain climate. And no author who knows what the public is, and by what mere caprice it is determined to the right or left, will either be elated by success or dispirited by failure. . . . My little boy is in the honey-moon of puerile happiness, having just put on that fashion of apparel which he must wear thro life.

Straying back to the days of Queen Anne, we catch a glimpse of the time in a letter of Matthew Prior, whose poetic effusions were, as he himself declared, "the product of his leisure hours," and who was commonly busy with politics and diplomacy; of whom, at his death, an admirer wrote these touching lines:

Horace and He were call'd in haste
From this vile Earth to Heaven;
The cruel year not fully pass'd
Ætatis, fifty seven.

This letter came from the collection of Dawson Turner, and was addressed to Sir Thomas Hanmer. Prior's letter is easier to read than is most of his poetry.

DEAR SIR: 'Twas ridiculous that since your leaving London I should have contented myself wth asking Mr. Coleman how you do without writing to you; but to let a letter from you go a week unan-

swered is downright impudence; the Devil take me if I am not ashamed of it. Confiteor, est mea culpa, mea maxima culpa. Rabelais gives you a whole chapter of the same stile, when Panurge in the tempest at once damns himself and prays: and now what to write is the question. My Ld Griffen is reprieved for a fortnight; her Maj is better, and designs for Winsor next week. The Scotch Prisoners are most of them bayled and gon home again—and all public matters are much in that indifferent situation in w^{ch} you left them. Lady Sandwich and Lady Fitzharding are gone out of town. Lord and Lady Jersey go next week. Your tutor Aldrich leaves us to-morrow. After these matters are adjusted, I think nobody will be left here, but myself and my fellow builder the Duke of Bucks: there is nothing printed worth my sending you except it be an acc^t of our American Colonies by Oldmixon, w^{ch} if you please to have, you will lay your commands upon me. I hope you are all well, from my Lady Dutchesse to M^{rs} Susan. I must charge you with my particular respects to M^{rs} Ramsey and she ought to take this as an extraordinary mark of my favour at this time, for I am really so splenitic, that I think I should hardly have done more for my own nutt brown Betty. Vive & vale.

Yours ever,

MAT: PRIOR

WEST: June 17th, 1708.

Returning from Anne to Victoria, here is a letter of Christina Rossetti to Bayard Taylor, in that beautiful, almost copper-plate hand-



Alfred, Lord Tennyson

Upper Gne Lodge
Kensington Gne
March 19/1866

My dear Sir

Your new book has just
arrived in a hamper of provisions
sent on here from Farringford,
for we have been staying here
for some weeks in a house
formerly, I believe, belonging to
Gent & Ormy, & now to Lady
Franklin & we get for the most
part supplied from the
farm at home.

writing of hers, which has nevertheless an individuality which copper-plate script does not possess; a handwriting resembling in some respects that of Mr. William Allen Butler. I am not certain what book of Taylor's elicited the letter, but I think it must have been *The Picture of St. John*, which was published in October, 1866.

166 ALBANY ST. LONDON—
N. W. ENGLAND—
22^d, 1867—

DEAR SIR—

I hope I have not seemed dilatory in acknowledging the gift of your book, which only reached my hands yesterday evening, although the autograph which enriches it bears the date of last year. Pray now accept my best thanks. As yet I have read little more than the introduction; this has interested me, the more so as your experiment in versification appears to me a very happy one: may I venture to add my satisfaction at your having decided against the occasional Alexandrine.

Pray allow me to remain

Very truly yours,

CHRISTINA G. ROSSETTI

Tennyson's letter to Bayard Taylor must refer to some other book than the one mentioned by Miss Rossetti, as it was sent before

The Picture of St. John was published. The Laureate manifestly felt hospitably disposed towards at least one American.

UPPER GORE LODGE.
KENNINGTON GORE.
March 19, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR:

Your new book has just arrived in a hamper of provisions sent on here from Farringford, for we have been staying here for some weeks in a house formerly, I believe, belonging to Count D'Orsay and now to Lady Franklin, and we get for the most part supplied from the farm at home. Many thanks for your book which will I have no doubt increase your reputation, and for your kindly letter. I am sorry that I was not at home to welcome your friend Mr. Norwood. If you intend to honour me with another visit perhaps it will be as well to send me notice a week or so before you come, that I may not miss you. We are generally away on the Continent during July and September.

Believe me, my dear sir,
Yours very truly,
A. TENNYSON

Tennyson's interest in his "hamper of provisions" and the supplies from the farm is about as unpoetic as the contents of my Shelley letter, which does not quite breathe the spirit of *Adonais* or the *Ode to the Skylark*. It is addressed to "Messrs Hayward, Esq. Solicitor,



Percy B. Shelley.

Percy Bysshe Shelley
From an engraving by W. Finden

Marlow, April 2/1817.

Dear Sir,

Be so good as to pay the
bill of Mr. Peacock; I enclose a check
for that purpose. — I was not sure that
I should be exactly right, if any account
- taken short of the actual amount would
be accepted. — Yours very truly
Percy B. Shelley.

Tookes Court, Chancery Lane, London,"
with the "Messrs" crossed out.

MARLOW, April 27, 1817.

DEAR SIR:

Be so good as to pay the debt of Mrs. Peacock; I enclose a check for that purpose. I need not say that I should be extremely glad if any accommodation short of the actual amount would be accepted.

Your very obliged servt—

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

No reason is assigned why the creditor should not receive the "actual amount" due, but perhaps that is the true poetic view of the subject of debt-paying, when the poet is the debtor.

I find that Mrs. Fields's specimen of Shelley—which she says is "at first sight not at all characteristic"—is very much like mine. I quote it from *A Shelf of Old Books*.

DEAR SIR, Enclosed is a check for (within a few shillings) the amount of your bill. Can't you make the Booksellers subscribe more of the Poem?

Your most obedient serv.

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Jan. 16, 1818.

I think it is highly characteristic. Mani-

festly he was afflicted with a mania for "rebates."

Bryan Waller Procter's letters are always pleasant and graceful. I quote one of them, for it is about autographs, and it shows a commendable sympathy with collectors. He writes to a friend:

Wednesday, 25 BEDFORD SQUARE.

My conscience (a tender thing) has been reproaching me any time this month past touching some autographs which I promised you. You yourself (having promised on the thought of my promise) are probably in a similar dilemma of conscience,—and are meditating perhaps divers unsatisfactory excuses towards . . . who, if I recollect right, is to be the depository of these same invaluable autographs. But comfort yourself. I have enclosed them, as rich a catalogue of nothings as the apothecary's shop (in *Romeo and Juliet*) produced. Such as they are, however, they are all that I can at present lay hands on. If in the course of a subsequent search I should alight upon the hieroglyphics of any other poet or prosier who bids fair to be immortal for the next 12 or 15 months, I will make you pay double its value by sending it to you by the two penny post.

In another letter written on Christmas day, 1866, when he was in his eightieth year, he says:

32, WYTHMOUTH STREET,
PORTLAND PLACE, W.

25 December 1866

Dear Sir

Thanks for your letter - It
reached me on Saturday night (late) - but I
am not every day in fighting (writing) condition,
and indeed the mechanical labor of writing is
not strong in my power - as you may see from
this not very graceful letter.

-
I have called Lamb & Hazlitt 'Unitarians'.
They were so according to their ^{own} professions -
& these I accept as truth. I am not able to
penetrate ~~farther~~ ^{deeper} & so examine them.

As to Leigh Hunt - I suspect that he is a
problem. I knew him for forty years. He

I have called Lamb and Hazlitt "Unitarians."¹ They were so, according to their own professions and these I accept as truth. I am not able to penetrate deeper and cross-examine them. As to Leigh Hunt, I confess that he is a problem. I knew him for forty years. He was continually tampering (coquetting) with matters in religion and morals that we are accustomed to consider as true and beyond question; and I have known him pushed to the verge of ill-temper (yet he was a good tempered man) by requests to explain what he meant by "Nature" and similar vague phrases which he was accustomed to resort to. Hazlitt used to say "Damn it, its like a rash that comes out every year in him. Why does n't he write a book and get rid of it?" I suppose that poor Hunt knows all the truth now—all that so few understand. He is beyond the ultima linea rerum. . . . As to my own small matters, I am quite content that they should crumble away and be forgotten. Literature was never my profession and no one can do *much* unless he strives and gives his whole soul to it. I am glad that you like (or do I mistake?) my memoir of dear Charles Lamb.

But I fear I long ago reached the tiresome stage in the matter of poets' letters. Just one more—for it refers to a Washington letter, which I have already mentioned, and also to a Milton document. It is from Samuël Rogers.

¹ I think it is "Unitarians"; the word is not very legible.

April 12, 1841.

MY DEAR SIR:—

Many, many thanks for your kind letter and for the precious relick which [you] inclosed in it. I have already another no less precious, for which I am indebted to Mr. Hamilton, a letter to his father from General Washington and on a most interesting subject, his acceptance of the Presidency. I have placed them side by side. I touch them with all reverence, and may they go down together inspiring the sentiments they breathe from generation to generation!

You ask me concerning Milton's assignment. I can only say that its authenticity has never been questioned. The handwriting is the same as in all his other deeds. It has always been referred to as an historical document, and was acquired by Sir Thomas Lawrence together with an assignment of Dryden witnessed by Congreve (a writing also which I believe you saw in my possession) from the executors of Tonson, the bookseller. The handwriting of a blind man being called forth only on important occasions is not so likely to degenerate as another's would do.

When will you come and see me again? Pray, pray come soon as I may not be to be [*sic*] found here.

Sincerely yours,
SAML ROGERS

ST. JAMES'S PLACE.
LONDON.

You may remember that the signature only is written by Milton. The deed is by a lawyer and it is witnessed by John Fisher and by Benjamin Green, *servants to Mr. Milton.*



SAMUEL ROGERS.

Samuel Rogers

From an engraving by W. Finden after the painting by Sir Thomas Lawrence

April 12, 1841.

My dear Sir

Many, many thanks for your kind letter
& for the precious relic inclosed in it. I have
already another no less precious, for which I am
indebted to Mr Hamilton, a letter to his Father
from General Washington & on a most interesting
subject, his acceptance of the Presidency. — I
have placed them side by side. I touch them
with reverence, & may they go down together,
inspiring the sentiments they breathe, from
generation to generation!

You ask me concerning Milton's Assignment
I can only say that its authenticity has never

Rogers lived until December, 1855, fourteen years after this letter was written. The Milton document was the original articles of agreement between Milton and his printer for the sale of the copyright of *Paradise Lost*. Rogers obtained it in 1831, and in 1852 he gave it to the British Museum. Facsimiles of the beginning and ending are to be found in Dr. Scott's book. This important document was disposed of at the sale of Sir Thomas Lawrence's effects for \$315. Rogers paid \$525 for it.

CHAPTER IX

DIARIES

Diaries—Evelyn and Pepys—Letter of Evelyn—Richard Steele to Sir Thomas Hanmer—Samuel Johnson—Edmund Burke to Fanny Burney—Lord Monboddo—Lord Clive—Earl of Shelburne—Lord Chatham—An Autograph Beggar—John Ruskin—J. S. Mill—Charles Dickens—Richard Cobden

THE Diary of John Evelyn possesses historical interest but the Diary of Samuel Pepys will always be more charming, because Pepys was the more human of the two men and he reveals himself with absolute freedom; moreover there is a flavour of naughtiness about the disclosures which always tends to the enjoyment of the reader although he might not always confess it. De Quincey had but a poor opinion of Evelyn, and said: "The mind of a man is very generally seen in the use he makes of a journal; Evelyn is very meagre and bad." We are not all of that opinion, and



John Evelyn

From the engraving by W. H. Worthington after the painting by
Walker

Evelyn's Diary, although not so lively as the record kept for a few years by his rival diarist, is valuable as the story of the life of a scholarly man in the latter part of the seventeenth century. The friendship of the two diarists continued until the death of Pepys in 1703, and his older contemporary survived him only three years. Pepys seems to have understood Evelyn and his vanity fairly well, but Evelyn did not fully understand Pepys, whose self-disclosures were generally confined to the pages of his journal. It is pleasant to contemplate a letter which is intimately associated with both of them,—one which Evelyn addressed "For Saml. Pepys Esq. at Mr. Hewer's house at Clapham, Surry," and which bears the endorsement in Pepys's handwriting: "Mr. Evelyn to S. P. A Letter of Regret after my sickness, with a Request of Mr. Arch-Deacon Nicholson's touching y^e use of some of my Scotch manuscripts."

DOVER STREET, 10 May, 1700.

SR—

I do most heartily congratulate y^e Improvement of your health, since your change of aire; which accept-

able newes your Servant brought this morning, and returned to you with our prayers and wishes for the happy progress and full restitution of it. In the mean time I take this opportunity of acquainting you that a worthy correspondent of mine (I am sure not unknown to you, Mr. Nicolson, Arch-Deacon of Carlisle) being it seems about a work in which he has occasion to mention some Affairs relating to the Scotts; and hearing from me that you were Indispos'd, writes this to me—

“I am troubled to heare of Mr. Pepy's Indisposition; I heartily wish his recovery and the continuance of a restored health. When I was an attendant on Mr. Sec. Williamson about 20 years ago, I often waited on him at his house in Westminster. But I was then (as I still am) too inconsiderable to be remembered by him. Besides an account of the author (if known) of his Ms. Life of Mary Q. of Scotts; I very much desire to know, whether there be any valuable matters relating to the History of Scotland amongst Sr R. Maitland's collections of Scottish poems? I observe that in the same volume with Balfour's Practique (or Reports, as we call 'em) he has a manuscript of the old Sea Laws of Scotland; I would beg to be Informed whether this last Treatise be the same with the *Leges posterem* (?) which (tho' quoted by Sr Jo. Skene, under that Latine title) is written in the Scottish Language, and is onely a List of the Customes of Goods Imported and Exported: If I may (through your kind intercession) have the favour of transcribing anything to my purpose out of his Library; I have a young kinsman (a clarke to Mr. Musgrave of this Parish) who will waite on him to that purpose.”

Dover-Street 10: May 1700.

S^r,

I do most heartily Congratulate & Improved
of your health, since your change of air; which acceptable
News your Servant brought to this morning, and returns
to you with our prayers and Wishes for the happy progress
and full restoration of it. — On the mean while, I take
this Opportunity of acquainting you, that a worthy Correspondent
of mine (I am sure not unknown to you, M^r Nicholson
Archdeacon of Exeter) being in Town, about a Work in
which he has Occasion to mention some Affairs relating to
the Scots; and hearing from me that you were indisposed,
writes thus to me.

I am troubled to hear of M^r Pepps Indisposition: I heartily
wish his recovery, and the continuance of a restored health —
When I was an Attendant on the Sec^y Williamson, about 20
years ago, I often waited on him at his House in Westminster.
But I was then (as I still am) too inconsiderable to be remem-
bered by him: — Besides an Account of the Author (if known)
of his MS. Life of Mary Q: of Scots: I very much desire to
know, whether there be any Valuable Matters relating to
the History of Scotland amongst M^r R. Maitlands Collections
of Scotch Poems? I observe, that in the same Volume with
Balfours Praeque (or Repose, as we call it) he has a
Manuscript of the old Sea-Laws of Scotland; I would be
informed whether this last Treatise be the same with the
legis prohemium, which is quoted by S^r John Spere, under that
notable Title is written in the Scottish Language, and is
only a List of the Customs of Goods Imported & Exported?
If I might then your kind Intercession have the favour
of transferring any thing to my purpose out of his Library
I have a young Kindman (a Clerk to Mr. Musgrave of
the Exchequer) who will wait on him to that purpose.

This S^r is M^r A. D^r Requests, and which indeed I
should have communicated to you, when I was lately to kiss
your hands: But so was I transported with seeing you
in so hopeful a way of Recovery, as it quite put
this, and all other things else out of my Thoughts.

I am now (God willing) about the middle of next Week,
for a Summer Residence at Wotton; where I have enough to
do with a decaying & ruinous Dwelling: But where yet my Friends
(or at least their Letters) will find me: And if I suspend my
Answer to M^r Nicholson, till you are at perfect Leisure to
inquire what to write (without giving you the least disturbance)
I am sure he will be highly Satisfied.

As I begin, so let me Conclude with the most Earnest
Prayers for your Health & Happiness, of S^r

Your most faithful
humble servant.

My wife presents her most
humble service to you, & we
both kiss M^r Shimmers hands.

John Evelyn

This Sr., is Mr. A. D.'s Request, and which indeede I should have communicated to you, when I was lately to kiss your hands: But so was I transported with seeing you in so hopefull and faire a way of Recovery, as it quite put this, and all other things else out of my thoughts.

I am now (God willing) about the middle of next Week, for a Summer residence at Wotton; where I have enough to do with a decayed and ruinous dwelling; But where yet my Friends (or at least their Letters), will find me; And if I suspend my answer to Mr. Nicolson 'til you are at perfect leasure to enable me what to write (without giving you the least disturbance) I am sure he will be highly satisfied.

As I begun, so let me conclude with the most earnest prayer for your Health and hapyness.

Sr, Your most faithfull humble servant,

EVELYN

My wife presents her most humble service to you and we both kiss Mrs. Skiner's hands.

When Richard Steele was a member of Parliament, in the time of Queen Anne, he produced, with the aid of Addison and others, a pamphlet called *The Crisis*, in which he dealt with the political questions of the day, notably with the matter of the Hanoverian succession, in such manner as to draw upon himself the wrath of all the Tories. Early in 1714 a motion was made to expel him from

his seat, on account of the alleged seditious nature of his writings; this was carried on the night of March 18, 1714. The next day he wrote to Sir Thomas Hanmer, the Speaker of the House, his friend whom he had supported for the Speakership in the preceding February, suggesting a certain line of conduct in reference to his misfortune. The letter is given in full in Aitkin's *Life of Steele*, ii., 20-21. Sir Thomas replied on March 20th, pointing out the inadvisability of following the suggestions and giving Steele some judicious counsel. Steele's answer, dated on March 21st, is now in my hands and is as follows:

BLOOMSBURY SQUARE.

March 21, 1714.

HONOURED SIR:

I hope you will have the goodnesse to forgive the method I tooke towards coming at another examination of my writings.

Before I had the Honour of receiving yours I had written to Mr. Wortley that your Hesitation in the matter had determined me that I had taken a wrong way.

I give you my most humble thanks for condescending with your usuall clearnesse and perspicuity to explain to me my errour.



Richard Steele

From the engraving by G. Vertue after the painting by I. Thornhill

Honoured Sir

Bloomsbury Square

March 21st 1714

I hope you will have the
goodness to forgive the method I took towards
coming at another examination of my Wri-
tings.

Before I had the Honour of re-
ceiving yours I had written to Mr. Wortley
that your Hesitation in the matter had deter-
mined me that I had taken a Wrong Way.

I give you my most humble thanks
for condescending with your usual Clearness
and perspicuity to explain to me My Error.

You have added the authority of
reason to an Implicit reliance on your
Character in Convincing me

Yr. most obedient & humble Servant
Richard Steele

You have added the authority of reason to an
Implicit relyance on your character in convincing

Yr most obedient & most humble servant,
RICHARD STEELE

Samuel Johnson died on December 13, 1784; on September 4th of that year he wrote a number of letters from Ashbourne, three of which are published in whole or in part in Dr. Hill's edition of Boswell, but one in my possession seems not to have been printed. I do not know the name of the man to whom it was addressed, but I think it must have been the King's Librarian. The handwriting shows no signs of feebleness.

SIR:—

I am pleased that you have been able to adorn the royal library with a book which I believe to be very rare, for I have not seen it. I have a very good copy, and did not know that it had been printed on two kinds of paper. The Polyglot Bible is undoubtedly the greatest performance of English typography, perhaps of all typography, and therefore ought to appear in its most splendid form among the books of the King of England. I wish you like success in all your researches.

The part of your letter that relates to a writer whom you do not name, has so much tenderness, benevolence, and liberality, in language so unlike the

talk of trade, that it must be a flinty bosom that is not softened into gratitude.

It has now pleased God to restore my health to a much better state, than when I parted from London; if my strength increases, indeed if it does not grow less, I shall hope to concert measures with you, and, by your help, to carry on the design to considerable advantage.

In the mean time accept, dear sir, my sincere thanks for your generous offer and friendly regard. Event is uncertain and fallacious, but of good intention the merit stands upon a basis that never can be shaken.

Add to your other favors that of writing often to,

Sir,

Your most humble servant,

SAM: JOHNSON

ASHBURN, Sept. 4, 1784.

I trouble you with two letters.

“Pretty Fanny,” as Dr. Johnson called Miss Burney, is reasonably sure of a permanent place in men’s memories, because of her diaries if not for her novels; in fact she wrote only two novels of merit, and they are of that order which, at this day, are more written about than read. Austin Dobson said that the greatest debt of gratitude we owe to Fanny Burney is that she prepared the way for Jane Austen! Fanny would have sulked and pouted at such a dubious compliment.



D^r SAMUEL JOHNSON

Samuel Johnson

kind.

It has now pleased God to restore my health to a much better state, than when I parted from London, if my strength increases, indeed, if it does ^{very} grow up, I shall hope to consult measures with you, and by your help, to carry on the design to considerable advantage.

In the mean time accept, dear Sir, my sincere thanks for your generous offer, and friendly regard. Work is uncertain and fallacious, but of good in which the great God often a basis that never can be shaken.

Add to your other favours that of writing often to

Sir,

Your most humble servant

Albany. Sept 4 1784

Sam: Johnson

I trouble you with no others.

For her second novel, *Cecilia*, she received only £250, which seems a small sum when we think of the amazing popularity of *Evelina*; but it may have been a handsome compensation in those times. Fanny tells with justifiable pride that Burke made her many most eloquent compliments on this book, "too delicate either to shock or sicken the nicest ear"; and she wrote to "Daddy" Crisp, thanking him for his approving words but adding: "though I cannot say they ever gave me a promise of such success as last Tuesday's post brought me in a letter from Mr. Burke!!!" That Burke letter, often quoted, is so well known that I hesitate to reproduce it; but the original before me has that peculiar charm which clings to the actual pen-tracings of a great man.

MADAM—

I should feel exceedingly to blame, if I could refuse myself the natural satisfaction, & to you the just but poor return of my best thanks for the very great instruction & entertainment I have received from the new present you have bestowed on the publick.

There are few, I believe I may say fairly, there are none at all, that will not find themselves better in-

formed concerning human nature, & their stock of observation enrich'd by reading your Cecilia.

They certainly will, let their experience in life & manners be what it may. The arrogance of age must submit to be taught by youth and beauty.

You have crowded into a few small volumes an incredible variety of characters; most of them well planned, well supported, and well contrasted with each other.

If there be any fault in this respect, it is one, in which you are in no great danger of being imitated. Justly as your characters are drawn, perhaps they are too numerous; but I beg pardon: I fear it is quite in vain to preach economy to those who are come young to excessive & sudden opulence.

I might trespass on your delicacy if I should fill my letter to you with what I fill my conversation to others. I should be troublesome to you alone, if I should tell you all I feel, and think, on the natural vein of humour, the tender pathetick, the comprehensive & noble moral, & the sagacious observation, that appear quite throughout that extraordinary performance. In an age distinguished by producing extraordinary women, I hardly dare to tell you where my opinion would place you amongst them. I respect your modesty, that will not endure the commendations which your merit forces from everybody.

I have the honour to be with great gratitude, respect and esteem,

Madam,

Your most obedient

& most humble serv^t,

WHITE HALL.

EDM. BURKE

July 29th, 1782.



Edmund Burke

Madam:

I should feel exceedingly to blame, if I could refuse my self, the natural satisfaction, & to you, the just but poor return, of my best Thanks for the very great instruction & entertainment I have received from the new present you have bestowed on the publick.

There are few, I believe I may say fairly, there are none at all, that will not find themselves better informed concerning human Nature, & their stock of observation enriched by reading your Cecilia.

They certainly will, let their experience in Life & Manners be what it may. The arrogance of age must submit to be taught by youth & Beauty.

You have crowded into a few small volumes an incredible variety of Characters; most of them well planned, well supported, and well contrasted with each other.

If there be any fault in this respect; it is one, in which you are in no great danger of being imitated.

Justly as your Characters are drawn, perhaps they are too numerous; - but I beg pardon; I fear it is quite in vain to preach economy to those who are come young to excessive & sudden Opulence.

I might trespass on your delicacy if I should fill my Letter to you with what I fill my Conversation to others. I should be troublesome to you alone, if I should tell you all I feel, and think, on the natural vein of humour, the tender pathetick, the comprehensiveness & noble moral, & the sagacious observation, that appears quite throughout that extraordinary performance.

In an age distinguished by producing extraordinary Women, I hardly dare to tell you where my opinion would place you amongst them. - I respect your modesty, that will not endure the commendations which your merit forces from every body.

I have the honour to be with great gratitude, respect and Esteem

Madam

Your most obedient

& most humble serv^t

Edm Burke

White Hall July 29th 1782.

My best Compliments & Congratulations to Doctor Burney on the great honour acquired to his family.

My best compliments & congratulations to Doctor Burney on the great honour acquired to his family.

(Address: MISS BURNEY—)

Dr. Burney wrote that when he told Johnson that Burke had thanked Fanny for her *instruction*, Johnson said: "'Tis very true, Sir, no man can read it without having ideas awakened in his mind that will mend the heart. When Fanny reasons and writes from her own feelings she is exquisite."

It is rather a far cry from Johnson and Burke to Lord Monboddo, but autograph portfolios sometimes make strange bedfellows. James Burnett, who was a judge and who became Lord Monboddo, learned and eccentric, gained immortality less by his learning than by his theory that "the orang-outang was of a class of the human species, and that its want of speech was merely accidental," a thesis which was popularised into the assertion, more interesting to the multitude, that man was originally possessed of a tail. He was ridiculed in his day, but we know now that his views were advanced and scientific and that he was, in a way, anticipating Darwinism. His letter

is addressed to Thomas Cadell, the elder, famous bookseller and publisher, and the book he refers to is probably *Antient Metaphysics*, the first volume of which was published in 1779.

EDIN. 11 March 1779.

SIR—

Mr. Balfour will send you by the first ship from Leith a new book of mine, not yet published here and which I do not intend should be published till it be first published by you. It will not be as you may see from the Title a popular book nor of great sale; but it will not disgrace your shop in the opinion of the learned; and it is to look for such books, as I am informed, that the learned come to your shop. Your profit by it, I am afraid will not be great; but as I hear there are but few books published at present, you may think it worth shop-room though I do not put my name upon the title page, you need not make it a secret that it is my work. As soon as you get the book, send copies to the following persons: The Earl of Mansfield, Sir John Pringle, Mr. Bankus, President of the Royal Society, Dr. Morton, Secretary of that Society, and Mr. George Scot, Commissioner of Customs. I refer you to Mr. Balfour for the particulars concerning the advertisement a copy of which he will send you.

I am, Sir—

Your most obedt humble servant,

JAS. BURNETT

(Address: MR. THOMAS CADELL—Bookseller in the Strand, London.)



ROBERT Lord CLIVE,
BARON of PLASSEY.

Robert, Baron Clive

A very different sort of a Lord was Robert Clive, the Baron of Plassey. After he had completed his conquests in India, by which he transformed the East India Company from a mere association of merchants into a body of princes enjoying vast revenues and ruling millions of people, he went back to England; but those who succeeded him in the government did not possess his commanding ability and fell into so many errors and abuses that the resulting disorder and hostilities demanded his return. Accordingly he was sent back by the Company to effect a reform. With four of his trusted friends he reached Calcutta in May, 1765, and in the ensuing November he wrote the letter which follows. The story of his later controversies at home and of his suicide is a familiar one.

CALCUTTA, 5th Nov. 1765.

DEAR PYBUS—

I must request you will not detain these [illegible] a moment, they are dispatched upon business of the utmost consequence to the Company and are to have one thousand rupees if they perform their journey to Madras in 24 days. You are the best judge, if they can proceed any part of the way by water.

The purport of our letter to the Presidency is to desire

that Messrs. Rupell, Aldersey, Kelsall, and Floyer may be sent immediately to supply the vacant seats in Council by the suspension and resignation of Messrs. Burdett, Gray, Senior, & Leicester; this settlement is rotten to the very core & I shall despair of going through with the undertaking without the assistance of the above-mentioned gentlemen. I have desired they may set out immediately overland & Mr. Kelsall may accompany them. Be sure to give me notice of their motions that I may send some Seapoys as far as Cuttuch to eschort them. They will I imagine have nothing to apprehend if they come privately & without a large attendance—they should have relays of bearers.

The reformation of this settlement, the reduction of the military expenses, & the collection of the revenues of these . . . is a great undertaking indeed; however we have already made a great progress & I make no doubt but the abilities & assistance of the Madras gentlemen will enable me to accomplish at last the intentions of the Company.

Enclosed I send you a short sketch of the Company's prospects at present; they will be yearly improving.

I hope you are getting ready my Long Cloth &c. Your diamond has been valued by 3 . . . jewellers & the medium given by my attorneys amounts to £2666.13—4^d so that you may finally settle every thing by paying the Ballance to Kelsall agreeable to your own desire.

I am, dear Pybus—

Yr affec. friend & servt,

(Endorsed—

CLIVE

The R HONBLE L^d CLIVE.

Dated 5th }
and 30th } Nov. 1765—

indeed, however we have already made a
great progress & I am no doubt but
the Abilities & Assistance of the Medical
Gentlemen will enable me to accomplish
at least the Intentions of the Company -

Inclosed I send you a short
Sketch of the Compa^ys Prospect at present
they will be yearly improving -

I hope you are getting ready
our Longcloth but your Diamond has
been valued by 3 eminent Jewellers &
the Medals given by my Attorneys amount
to £2666.13.4^{so} that you may find little
wrong thing by not paying the
Balance to Kelsall agreeable to your
order. I am Dear Sir
Yours Affly. Robert Clive

When William Petty, Earl of Shelburne and later Marquis of Lansdowne, wrote this letter to Lord Egremont, he was only twenty-five, but he had served in the army in Germany and in the House of Commons. He stood with Chatham against the attempt to coerce the American colonies, although, while he advocated conciliation, he was strongly opposed to American independence. Had his advice been followed we might never have gained that independence, so perhaps George III. and his silly Ministers were better friends of ours than Chatham or Shelburne without intending it. This letter indicates the enlightenment of Shelburne's views. At the time it was written, Pitt had resigned, England had abandoned Prussia, and Spain had joined France in war against England; but the peace of 1763 was in contemplation, when Canada was to be given up by France and with it the island of Cape Breton, of which Choiseul said: "I ceded it on purpose to destroy the English nation. They were fond of American dominion and I resolved they should have enough of it." Nearly a century and a half has gone by, but England

still has Canada and Cape Breton, and the nation has not yet been destroyed.

WHITTON, July 9, 1762.

MY DEAR LORD:

I send you inclos'd a Letter from Francis.—I have written to him that the opening he mentions of the German Commissariat & Prince Ferdinand's Intrigues in it may be very proper. The consideration of oeconomy may be even extended to N. America which has been little consider'd, and where the War has been carried on in like manner however, without Plan, Knowledge or Foresight of any sort. But that at present it is necessary to bring back the minds of the People to the origin of the War, and to their State in 1754. That & that alone can dispose men to form just Judgments of the conditions of a Peace whenever they may come. The expence &c. of the War then becomes a strong additional argument after it has been first shewn that the intent of it was to defend not to acquire which is impossible by the nature of it, being different from all former Wars, even on the Continent, where however the chief part of our expence now lies. He is desirous of the Papers relative to the Kg. of Prussia's offer in 1756—as Mr. Fox, tho he was Secretary of State that year knows nothing of them. I have told him in all events to come here on Monday. If your Lordship have anything to add, you 'll be so good therefore to let me know before that.

I am with great regard, my dear Lord,

Your most Faithful Servt.

(To LORD EGREMONT).

SHELBURNE

The following letter from Chatham was written shortly before he resigned from the ministry and when Spain was diligently seeking for reasons to declare war.

HAYES, Sunday, June 29th 1760,

Private—

DEAR SIR—

Wanting very much your lights and assistance in a matter of great consequence, I should be extremely glad if your engagements should happen to leave you at liberty tomorrow morning, in which case I will beg the favour of seeing you in St. James's Square at a little before eleven. The matter in question is the *ground* of the sentences of condemnation in Doctor's Commons against ships under Spanish Commissions, the Spanish Ambassador having advanced positively and strongly in a memorial on this embarrassing subject, that all Spanish ships have been immediately and indiscriminately condemn'd at Doctor's Commons for carrying French property. I trust this allegation will be found unsupported in fact, and if, as I hope, regard has been had in the proceedings of the Court of Admiralty to the King's orders and instructions of ye 5th Octr. 1756, I may be enabled to answer with advantage that part, at least, of the memorial, which contains an imputation without foundation. I thought it might not be useless to break thus far the subject I wish to confer with you upon. I am with perfect esteem & consideration

Dear Sir,

most faithfully & affect^{ly} yrs—

W^m PITT

There is a time-honoured device of the unscrupulous autograph-hunter—who may be more justly called autograph-poacher—much vaunted by Mr. Charles Robinson, to wit: that of asking of the victim some apparently innocent question, usually of a nature flattering to the self-esteem of the personage addressed. Nearly every one bites at this pleasant bait—statesmen, soldiers, authors—authors more greedily than any of the others. It is not disagreeable to be requested for information as to when such and such a book was first published or for advice to a literary neophyte, gazing from afar at the star of genius. In the course of his experience a collector constantly encounters examples of this despicable method, the knowledge of which brings the blush of shame to his ingenuous countenance. I have been much interested in the success of our William Riddle. I began by believing in Mr. Riddle's sincerity when I first came upon his illustrious name as the recipient of this letter from John Ruskin:



Portrait of John Ruskin

John Ruskin
From an old woodcut

CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE
OXFORD.

MY DEAR MR. RIDDLE—

I did not in the least mean to *hurt* you—but if possible—which to my surprise I see was possible—to stagger you, and get you to think in other directions. You may be of *great* use—none of us know what use—we must all wait and do what we are asked by God to do. When He wants you to lecture, He will find you the place & means. He would for instance enable you to convince *me* or some other hard “man of practical sense” that what you tried to say was right—and we could help—nay *send* you to say it. But if you cannot convince *us* neither would you others less docile.

“Self-adoration” is just thinking that the world can’t do without us, nor God manage his own business.

I talk—but only because chance has always forced me into positions where it was required. I should most thankfully hold my tongue were I not *pushed* into places where speech is demanded. I have to speak on Thursday—I wish the audience were at Jerusalem or Jericho—or anywhere but in hearing of me. Go on thinking and making your purposes clear. The time will come for talk if they *are* so.

Ever truly, sir,

Affectionately yours,

J. RUSKIN

This was characteristic. That sort of easy familiarity with the Deity which enables Mr. Ruskin to assert that God will tell Riddle when to “lecture,” while only “chance” is

needed to set Ruskin to talking is rather startling; and his delusion that he was "a hard man of practical sense" is amusing, for practicality was by no means one of his distinctive virtues. But then he was Ruskin, and that is enough.

I began to doubt the good faith of Mr. Riddle when I next discovered a letter to him written by John Stuart Mill, which is practically sensible enough. Mr. Riddle is now concerned about questions of political economy and not about delivering lectures.

BLACKHEATH PARK, KENT.

Oct. 29, 1870.

DEAR SIR:

No question can be greater or more urgent than that of the relations of the poor to the rich, and though for the rectification of those relations political and social reforms are the principal requisite, I am quite prepared to admit that "practical engineering measures" may be highly useful auxiliaries. But of this part of the subject I cannot deem myself a competent judge; though I should be very willing, when I know your proposals, to tell you whether, in my opinion, there are any objections to them on the score of political economy.

I am, Dear Sir,

Yours very faithfully—

W. RIDDLE ESQ.

J. S. MILL



Corpus Christi College
Oxford

My dear Mr Riddle

I did not in the
least mean to hurry you - but
- if possible - which to say implies
I see was possible - to hurry you,
and get you to think in the
directions.
You may be of great use - now
if we knew what use - we must
all wait - and do what we are
asked by God to do. When He
wants you to lecture, He will
find you the place & means.
- He would for instance, enable
you to convince me a lower
other hand "man of practical sense"
that what you used to say was
right - and we could help - say
send you to say it. But

That Mr. Riddle was less of a lecturer or a political-economist than a skilful suppliant for autographs, is further commended to my belief by this letter which he elicited from Charles Dickens:

OFFICE OF ALL THE YEAR ROUND.
No. 26 WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND.
LONDON W. C. Friday The Ninth.
November, 1866.

DEAR SIR:

I have read your little daughter's story. I do not understand whether or not you suppose it to have any claim to publication, or any address to general readers. If you do, I think you are altogether mistaken.

Regarded as the production of a very clever child, it is interesting and curious. But the working of children's minds, when watched, is always so. I have certainly known other children to write as well, and to display more fancy, who had no faculty whatever of authorship in them as they grew older. If the case was mine, I would show just the same playful interest in this effort of childish invention as in any other more usual one; I would on no consideration lead the child to think that I regarded it as very exceptional; and I would quietly observe (taking some years for the purpose) whether it developed or died out.

Faithfully yours,

CHARLES DICKENS

WILLIAM RIDDLE ESQUIRE

He also worked the familiar game on Richard Cobden, who sent him this letter, directed to "Wm. Riddle, South Lambeth, S:"

ATHENAEUM CLUB, 27 July, 1864.

SIR:—

There is a volume published in Ludgate St. called, I think, "Men of the Time" or some such title which contains some dates and facts of my career in public life, which are correct. I know no other work to which I could refer, apart from the general records of the political events of the day.

I am your obedt servt,

R. COBDEN

WM. RIDDLE ESQ.

After all this, one cannot help feeling sorry that Ruskin did not hurt him even more than he thought he did; but it is quite pleasant to observe these men of high fame and engrossing mental occupations, cheerfully giving information and advice to a stranger who appears to have solicited it without any right to ask it. Perhaps, after all, I have misjudged Mr. Riddle, for I am judging him merely by the circumstantial evidence.

CHAPTER X

SOME NINETEENTH-CENTURY WRITERS

Nineteenth-Century Writers—De Quincey—His Letter to His Solicitor—Carlyle on De Quincey—Carlyle Letter to Mrs. Carlyle—Thackeray to Ainsworth—Thackeray to Fraser—Dickens's Letter on the Staplehurst Railway Disaster—Shirley Brooks—Brooks to Artemus Ward—Henry Thomas Buckle—Locker-Lampson.

It is always a surprise to the elderly person to find that the great literary reputations of his early days are becoming antiquated. It seems but a little while ago when Carlyle, De Quincey, and Leigh Hunt were very modern names, while now they appear to belong to a fairly remote past. My publisher friend would doubtless regard their works as having "no commercial value," unless as examples of the bygone in books and for some associations connected with them. Whether the change in the whole character of English literature

in the last thirty years has been for the better, it would be presumptuous to venture an assertion; and the opinion of a sexagenarian on such a subject is of little value in these progressive days. The tastes of readers as well as the style of writers change radically in times of fierce activities. Still, the early twentieth century is not more at variance with the middle nineteenth than the early nineteenth was with the eighteenth. It must be remembered also that while the multitude, whose approval gives the "commercial value" to the products of the publishers, and whose preferences are noised abroad if not in part created by the newspaper press, may have forgotten the old favourites, there is a goodly number of readers who are fond of something besides fiction and the popular novelties; and although even with them the amiable Hunt is now chiefly a pleasant memory, the best of De Quincey and most of Carlyle endure in favour. Naturally I am speaking of my own country, for no American, unless it may be Mr. George W. Smalley, would dare to utter any views in regard to literary conditions in England.

There is always an element of fascination about De Quincey due to his peculiar personality. He was a strange creature, ever on the point of doing something great but never accomplishing it. I have quite a number of his letters, from which I select only one; rather a long one, it is true, but in his small, distinct, and legible handwriting it fills only four pages of ordinary note paper. It displays the diffuseness, the needless propensity to elaborate every thought, the protracted efforts to reach a definite point, which characterise all his writings. He could have said to his negligent agent all that was necessary in a fourth of the space he occupied. He stopped only at the end of the last page of his paper, and if the sheet had been folio he would have filled it to the very close. The letter is severe on the lawyer, who was manifestly slow, but lawyers are apt to be dilatory about matters which seem to them not to be very pressing. It indicates some of the miseries of having literary clients—their prolixity, the queer meanderings of their minds, their impatience, their lack of sound business sense. We must admit

however that the solicitor was somewhat remiss in this instance, but then we do not know his side of the story, and one may not rely implicitly on De Quincey's statements of fact about any subject. He often saw things through the mists of opium and they lead to exaggeration.

Monday Evening, July 17, 1837.

MY DEAR SIR:—

On Friday last I wrote a note to you containing three distinct questions. I had in return a verbal message to this effect—that you were too much fatigued by your journey from the South to reply at that time, but that you would take an early opportunity of doing so. Three days have since elapsed: and no answer having arrived, I am compelled to write again most urgently on the same subject.

My questions are in substance these:—

1. What steps have you taken, or are you taking with regard to the loan upon the reversion?
2. What is the precise situation of the Guarantee fund? That is to say, is that fund detained as a guarantee to yourself by way of indemnification for security given by you to the Caledonian—or as a guarantee directly to the Caledonian?
3. I have [upon grounds stated in my last note] a claim on the Caledonian for £16—13—4. Now this sum, trifling as it may seem, has unfortunately become of importance to me, exhausted as I am by



Very truly yours,
Thomas De Quincey.

Thomas De Quincey

the endless delays in these loan negotiations. What then is my proper course for recovering it?

These are my three questions: to the first only my eldest son received on Saturday a verbal answer, viz: "that you strongly advised me *not* to borrow." Now this is perplexing to me: my application to yourself never was for advice—as upon the general question of borrowing or not borrowing [that was not in my choice] but for your practical aid in effecting the loan. Then, as to the particular advice, how is that reconcileable with your previous letters and acts—all implying the very opposite advice? Or, supposing it *were* reconcileable, and taking it separately upon its own merits, by what arguments do you justify such an advice? Why should *my* reversion afford a less eligible basis for a loan than the reversions of other people?

Finally let me say that you seem most inadequately to appreciate either my conduct or my present situation.

First, with regard to my situation [all caused by the lingering course of the negotiations for the loan], let me rehearse a few of its leading points—a family in Cumberland sold up and effectually ruined; their credit having now been irreparably blighted; myself hunted in every direction by writs and diligences; two decrees already issued against me, and execution rapidly approaching; others daily threatened with insolent clamors at my door;—finally, from mere grief and agitation of mind at witnessing these ruinous consequences of delay, sickness now making ravages in one member of my family such as I do not wish to speak of or to think of; but the fact you may as-

certain from Major Miller. Will it be denied—that any agent of reasonable activity armed with the power contained under my uncle's will, might have averted these heavy calamities?

Well, such being my situation, secondly what has been my conduct? Take one fact in illustration of it—viz. the fact of my extreme delicacy in neither making, nor allowing to be made, any application to the Caledonian office for the information wanted. In that way I could have obtained all I sought; and in the most authentic shape. Yet, because such a course seemed liable to the construction that I did not repose confidence in you, I abstained from it; and that too after all applications to yourself had proved fruitless. Nay, to such an excess did I carry this delicacy—a delicacy which you seem so little to have appreciated,—that even after your abrupt departure to London without even a message left for me, had made an almost open avowal that you did not think my affairs worthy of any attention, and had thus cancelled any claim which the most sensitively honest person could fancy to a further continuance of such delicacy, even then—[and solely upon this consideration that such a step would convey to the Caledonian an expression of distrust towards yourself]—and (in the midst of my intense and surely most natural desire to know the real situation of my affairs) would not apply to that office.

Surely you will perceive in all this, as well as in my steadfast forbearance to put any the very slightest question to your clerks during your absence, conduct the most honorable and considerate towards yourself; and *that* too under the most trying perplexities

cy, — a delicacy which you seem so little to have appreciated,
— that even after your abrupt departure to London ^{without giving me any notice} had made
an almost open avowal that you did not think my affairs worthy
of any attention, and had thus ~~thereby~~ cancelled any claim which
the most sensitively honorable person could fancy to a further con-
tinuance of such delicacy, even then — [and solely upon this
consideration that such a ~~renewed~~ step would convey to
the Caledonian an expression of distrust towards yourself —
I continued the same trying perseverance, and (in the midst of
my intense ^{and surely most rational} desire to know the real situation of my affairs)
would not apply to that Office.

Surely you will perceive in all this, as well as in my ~~the~~
steadfast perseverance to put any ~~the~~ ^{the} slightest question to your
clerks during your absence, conduct the most honorable and
considerate towards yourself; and that too under the most trying
~~whatsoever~~ perplexities or even calamities which I believed
you to have been capable of availing had you chosen to exert your-
self. To such conduct on my part I cannot suppose that you
will any longer delay to make a corresponding return; if not by
any practical services of the kind which I had once anticipated,
at all events by giving me the information which I have so
earnestly sought from you. Very sincerely yours,
T. De Quincey.

or even calamities which I believed you to have been capable of averting had you chosen to exert yourself. To such conduct on my part I cannot suppose that you will any longer delay to make a corresponding return; if not by any practical services of the kind which I had once anticipated, at all events by giving me the information which I have so earnestly sought from you.

Very sincerely yours,
T. DE QUINCEY

We are told that De Quincey was utterly unable to take his affairs firmly in hand and deal with them, but he seems to have understood fully the subject of the loan on the reversion. Mr. Hogg says: "During my editorship of *Titan* . . . De Quincey often astonished me by his shrewdness in the affairs of everyday life." I think that his strange ways in matters financial about which so many tales are related were due less to incapacity than to indifference.

De Quincey was, after a fashion, liked by Carlyle, who privately abused him less than he did most people who were unfortunate enough to meet him. Yet T. C. wrote of his friend in the *Reminiscences* in that exasper-

ating manner of his which makes me long to tell him what an absurdly conceited, cross-grained old curmudgeon he was. I quote:

He was a pretty little creature, full of wire-drawn ingenuities, bankrupt enthusiasms, bankrupt pride, with the finest silver-toned low voice, and most elaborate gently-winding courtesies and ingenuities in conversation. "What would n't one give to have him in a box, and take him out to talk!" That was Her criticism of him, and it was right good. A bright, ready and melodious talker, but in the end inconclusive and long-winded.

The old boor seems to have thought that he could make amends for his boorishness by writing "her" with a capital H. Mrs. Carlyle showed her goodness of heart, for she nursed the Opium Eater through a long illness—at her own home, I believe—and De Quincey said of her, "She was, indeed, the most angelic woman I ever met upon this—God's earth." The story of Carlyle and his wife has been told over and over again, and in so many different ways that it has become quite wearisome. The subject has been talked out and written out, people have quarrelled fiercely



T. Carlyle

Thomas Carlyle

over it in books and pamphlets, volumes have been filled with it. The case was evidently that of two people of genius, with all the irritability of genius—especially Carlyle—having no children to occupy their attention and draw them out of themselves; both Scotch, who loved and squabbled, squabbled and loved, and talked and wrote overmuch about their respective infirmities. I always try to keep myself impartial between the two, but even the laborious efforts of the man's warmest partisans fail to convince me that he was not a sour, selfish, unbearable person with an exaggerated sense of his own importance. I think this long letter of Carlyle's to his wife contains some evidence of his characteristics. I do not know whether it has ever been published and I am too indolent to search for it in the huge mass of Carlyliana.

SCOTSBRIG, Friday afternoon—

DEAREST—

A thousand thanks for your excellent little letter. I despaired of it altogether for this day: but there it has come in, from the pocket of Jamie, and done me a world of good. Do not, pray, do not, let me want for a pennyworth so long as I am far from you.

You found, hardly decipherable, on a sheet hurried off from Ecclefechan with the sea still jumbling in my ears, and all chaos in my heart,—some notification that I had come hither; that I had found vague tidings of my mother being dangerously ill at Dumfries. A letter written yesterday there, to Jack, which I expect he has communicated to you, will explain that matters stood considerably better than we apprehended. My mother had had a really bad turn, but was now out of danger and daily growing better. Our cattle and modes of conveyance here are what you know, or even worse. Nevertheless having once ascertained that my mother was out of danger, the next project was to drive up the old dilapidated lumber of a gig, with one of Austin's plough-horses in it, next day (that was, yesterday) and surprise your mother at Breakfast. The remembrance of *our* last feat in that way, however, rather moderated my enthusiasm; and the day breaking up to be the warmest and finest yet seen this season, and as if made on purpose for getting my mother home, I gave up Templand for that time, and bending all my industries hitherward, happily tho' wearisomely got the thing accomplished; and here the poor mother is, already greatly comforted, quieted, and not much worse than her wont. You can tell Jack: we did *not* need a chaise; we drove in the gig, and even took *Gill* and Ecclefechan by the way,—against my advice, but according to her earnest express desire. The sun shone all the way, and no wind blew except a breath from the west. To-day such an enterprise would not have been possible.

As for me, I am *washed* all to rags; with one wish

Scotsburg, Friday afternoon.

Dearest, A thousand thanks for your excellent little letter. I despaired of it all-together for this day; but then it has come in, from the school of Jamie, and done me a world of good. Do not, pray do not, let me wait for a heavenly week so long as I am far from you.

More bound, hardly decipherable, on a sheet hurried off from Gulefschuan with the sea still jumbling in my ears, and all chaos in my heart, - some

Stewart of Gillenbie has the dishosal gift.
I consider that it will be worth while
to hear a little farther what way the
matter does stand. Perhaps Stewart will
call for me here, or write to me about
it, within two days. My Goot's views
on the matter are of course a moment-
-ary item. Will she go with me cheerfully,
or will it be, "forced to go voluntarily"?
That latter is a bad method!

On the whole I rather think to-
-~~move~~^{my} is your Sunday's host at London.
Alas, no it is: hungry morning at Chel-
-sea, no hospitality of a better. I need
not send this therefore till tomorrow!
Adieu, Dear good Jeannie: be patient
with me, kind to me. Yours ever
T. C.

Saturday Noon. — Now second letter arrived al-
-so last night, again a most welcome messenger!

left, that all mortals would let me entirely alone;—my Goody's letters are a decided exception: alas, I think her black eyes looking on me would be so beneficial; and yet do I not know how the spirit is willing and the flesh weak, and probably even she is better at a distance from me!

The question when I am coming home, the only important question, I do not answer to-day. I will write again to-morrow. I have some thought of going by Newcastle, and seeing Miss Martineau; but I know not the days of the steamers yet. I mean to sit as nearly as possible altogether silent here. To consider what I wanted, and what I want! Indeed, the total deficiency of eligible locomotives, except one's feet, gives me the greatest inducement not to stir. . . .

On the whole I rather think *to day* is your Sunday's post at London. Alas, yes it is; Monday morning, at Chelsea, no possibility of a letter. I need not send this therefore *till* to-morrow! Adieu, Dear good Jeannie; be patient with me, kind to me.

Yours ever,

T. C.

Saturday Noon—Your *second* letter arrived also yesternight, again a most welcome messenger! It lay waiting me here, brought over by little Jane, as Jamie and I returned from a very still walk in the gloaming to Kirtlebridge where Jenny lives, whom we had found in the neatest of kitchens pacifically washing her youngest child under the blessed dusk of our all-encircling Heaven. Poor creatures, after all.

You are always good to me, dear Goody, best

Goody! Never two letters have done me more good than my acquisition for a week past. "Honble Mrs. Marshall" had honourably forwarded the first, franked by her own delicate hand. What a singular demi-quavering O La of sweet sensibility she is. I will explain more at large when we meet. Today I despatch her the *Dumfries Courier* for thanks and a sigh. No modified arrangement with any such concern would suit me the least in the world—yet if they had asked me to stay till Thursday I would cheerfully have done it, and had perhaps been nearer you today.—The invaluable inclosures did arrive in complete safety, much to the admiration of us all. It is strikingly recognizable; a smart little Goody (well worth some kisses, one would say)—tho' there is something too *pincerish* about the lips: and the expression of the *petit nez retroussé* is visibly exaggerated. Did you send one to your mother? Jack has despatched two of himself done by the same artist; the primness of *his* upper lip, an occasional character of him, is stereotyped there in a very conspicuous manner; but perhaps it is better than could be expected. Now I will have done with the sunbeam too, and pay for it in hard money; wherefore if there be any good reason for the operation, pray set about it, and have the thing ready for me when I arrive.—By the way, I wrote two letters to Jack; directed, the first of them, No 23 (which was wrong), the second of them (aright) No 40, Porchester Terrace; perhaps as he flies so thro' the world neither of them has yet got to hand.

We all laughed here at your adventure with the serene Ladyship and the sticks; I read that narrative

for the general benefit. Proper, to give that high sailing female individual as good as she brought. It is vain for the like of her to come down to No 5—thank Heaven, we have a Goody whom no gilt sticks need attempt to astonish; who sits, deaf as Alsa Crag, in the middle of all such charming. Well; what can we say but *Allah akbar*, *Allah kerim*—the all-wise great Creator makes many things, and has a certain never-failing mercy for them all! . . .

Here at Scotsbrig, this day, things go somewhat better, with me at least, than yesterday. My mother too, tho' she continues very weakly seems not to be worse, tho' they have kept her close in bed this morning, the grey *damp* east-wind being far from genial. She is much quieter in mind, here in her own place; that sunny day was a lucky one for us to get her hither. Irabdea, really a discreet, delicate-minded woman, waits on us all with endless assiduity; an air of order and decorum, looking thro' never such imperfection of equipment, is blessed and welcome to one. My shoes are polished (for example) into the express similitude of bright chivalry *iron* shoes; I dress in the other *end* room, where a toilet is spread with mathematical regularity, an abundant warm soft water is a real luxury to wash in. Best of all, I slept this morning till 8, I have had an hour added daily since I came, and am now got to this to day, in fact, I feel very considerably better. Silence, blessed silence! Only Will^m Graham came tumbling in, yesterday afternoon, the formidablest bore now living; poor fellow, he was fast putting me into the bare move, when I gave Jamie his signal and we moved for Kirtlebridge. I have Herschell's book of *Natural*

Science, very wise, dull, and commonplace; fit for a case like mine. *Well let alone*, alas, that is all that the wearied soul petitions for at present. . . .

Annandale is largely mixed with melancholy and chagrin for me; yet it is one's native soil,—impressive with the shadows of past years; sadder sometimes, yet with a composing sadness, than Hades itself need be! We shall see. I have written also to the Newcastle people to say what are the times of their steamers. Were this dull rooted headache (fruit of long bilious fret) which is daily fading out, once entirely *faded* I should be readier for most things.—Adieu dear wifekin—I do love thee, know that always. Remember me to Darwin and the Whirlwind. Tell John to compose himself, and become *capable* of using his capabilities. Poor Helen shall make me coffee again before long. Write always. Adieu.

T. CARLYLE

Envelope addressed

MRS. CARLYLE—

5 Cheyne Row, Chelsea,

London.

P. O. mark on back—April 24, 1841.

Thackeray letters are always in demand and appear to increase in pecuniary value, even more than those of Dickens; possibly because Dickens wrote more letters and the supply is abundant. One of my Thackeray letters is particularly valuable to me because it contains examples of both of his styles of hand-



W. M. Thackeray

William Makepeace Thackeray

writing, the upright and the slanting, and also because it was written to Ainsworth, whom he was always depreciating and of whom he said and wrote disparaging and ill-natured things, as Mr. S. M. Ellis points out in his excellent and interesting book, *William Harrison Ainsworth and His Friends*, published in 1911. Whatever may be their respective merits as authors, Dickens had a more generous and lovable disposition than his mighty compeer. Ainsworth firmly believed that both of them were his friends but Dickens never ridiculed him behind his back. In this letter Thackeray is referring to his lectures on "The Four Georges."

36 ONSLOW □, Jany 13, 1857.

MY DEAR AINSWORTH—

You 'll think this correspondence is never a going to stop—and laugh when I tell you that here's *another* put off!—only from 5 to 6:30 however, and I 'll tell you why. Yesterday after my letter to you was despatched Mr. Beale came to me for 4 lectures at Brighton to be paid at the extremely moderate figure of 50 guineas per lecture (this is between ourselves). The only days we could give them are Wednesday, Thursday, Friday 24th at 3 o'clock, and I shall have to speak again in the evening here. Now this is the plan of campaign. We start from

Brighton by the 5 o'clock train. My servant is in waiting at the station to take our luggage. My (jobbed) Brougham whisks us off to Painters, Ship and Turtle, Leadenhall St., where a neat dinner awaits us, a bottle of East India particular and one of Claret. At 7.30 the Brougham takes us to Edward St., and at 9.25 whither we like first, and then home to this house where we all insist you must stop and sleep. And so for the present farewell, old friend. Who knows there may be ANOTHER letter yet? The Brighton room may be engaged &c. &c. About these matters due notice shall be given, but on Saturday and Sunday 24-25, please the Lord, you dine with

Yours always,

W. M. THACKERAY

I find I write upright with the steel pen, slanting with the quill.

Yet to this "old friend," Thackeray was always unjust, according to Blanchard Jerrold, who adds: "He caricatured him unmercifully in *Punch*, and never lost an opportunity of being amusing at his expense."

Another letter of Thackeray was written to Fraser, the publisher, in regard to his contributions to *Fraser's Magazine* for 1839 which were afterwards reprinted under the title of *The Paris Sketch Book*. The "impromptu" is not strikingly brilliant.

36 Grosvenor □ . Jan'y 13. 1857.

My dear Ainsworth

You'll think this correspondence is never a going
to stop - and laugh when I tell you that here's another
put off! - only from 5 to 6.30 however and I'll tell you
why. ^{after my letter to you was despatched} Yesterday Mr. Beale comes to me for 4 lectures
at Brighton to be paid at the extremely moderate figure
(this is between ourselves)
of 50 guineas per lecture - The only days we could give
them are Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday 24th
I shall have to speak
at 3 o'clock - and ^{we} again in the evening here.

Now this is the plan of campaign. & start from
Brighton by the 5 o'clock train - My servant is in waiting

at the Station to take our luggage. My (jotted)
Brougham whisks of us off to Painter's Shop & Turk's
Leadenhall Street where a neat dinner awaits us
a bottle of East India particular and one of Claret.
at 7.30 the Brougham takes us to Edwards St. and
at 9.25 whither we take first, and then home to the
house where we all insist you must stop & sleep.

and so for the present farewell old friend. I hope
know there may ANOTHER letter yet? The Brighton
Room may be engaged to be. About these matters
due notice shall be given but on Saturday & Sunday
24.25. please the Lord you live with

Yours always

I find I write upright with
the steel pen & writing with the pen.

Wm Thackeray.

13 Gt. Cornhill 1 July.

Dear Fraser

now directly

To make up my account -

if you owe me so much the better
I am hard up and want money,
if you don't, so much the better too,
for you that is: and I shall know
where I am. Respectfully yours

W. M. Thackeray.

Impromptu.

In case you owe send what you owe
In case you don't don't send you know.

Some Nineteenth-Century Writers 195

19 GT. CORAM ST. 1 July, [1839]

DEAR FRASER:

Do make up my account now directly, if you owe me so much the better—I am hard up and want money, if you don't, so much the better too, for you that is, and I shall know where I am.

Sempiternally yours,

W. M. THACKERAY

Impromptu

In case you owe send what you owe

In case you dont, dont send you know.

The letters of Dickens, generally written in his favourite blue ink, are marked by much frank *bonhomie* and bear no evidence of laboured effort to be striking or amusing, while Thackeray, to me at least, seems to be ever mindful of the fact that he is "Mr. Thackeray, the celebrated novelist." One of them, which is among my pets, is not unfamiliar and it was printed in *The Letters of Charles Dickens* (ii., 229-231), but parts of it are omitted in the published version. It is a graphic account of the terrible railway accident which occurred on June 9, 1865, at Staplehurst, a few miles south of Maidstone, due to negligence on the part of an employee. It was written to his old school-friend, Thomas Mitton.

196 **Rambles in Autograph Land**

GAD'S HILL PLACE—HIGHAM BY ROCHESTER, KENT—

Tuesday thirteenth June, 1865—

MY DEAR MITTON,—I should have written to you yesterday or the day before, if I had been quite up to writing. I am a little shaken, not by the beating and dragging of the carriage in which I was, but by the hard work afterwards in getting out the dying and dead, which was most horrible.

I was in the only carriage that did not go over into the stream. It was caught upon the turn by some of the ruin of the bridge, and hung suspended and balanced in an apparently impossible manner. Two ladies were my fellow-passengers, an old one and a young one. This is exactly what passed:—you may judge from it the precise length of the suspense. Suddenly we were off the rail and beating the ground as the car of a half emptied balloon might. The old lady cried out "My God!" and the young one screamed. I caught hold of them both (the old lady sat opposite, and the young one on my left), and said: "We can't help ourselves, but we can be quiet and composed. Pray don't cry out." The old lady immediately answered, "Thank you. Rely upon me. Upon my soul, I will be quiet." The young lady said in a frantic way, "Let us join hands and die friends." We were then all tilted down together in a corner of the carriage, and stopped. I said to them thereupon: "You may be sure nothing worse can happen. Our danger *must* be over. Will you remain here without stirring, while I get out of the window?" They both answered quite collectedly, "Yes," and I got out without the least notion what had happened. Fortunately I got out with great



Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens

From the etching by Hollyer

Good Will Place.

Higham by Rochester, Kent.

Tuesday June 13th 1865

Dear Mr. Mitton. I cannot have written to
you yesterday or the day before, but I had been
quite up to working. I saw a little shaking
with the beating and dragging of the
curtains in which I was, but I the hard
work afterwards in getting out the things and
dead, which was most horrible.

I was in the most curious, that all did
not go over with the stream. It was very
pleasant to see some of the ruins of the
buildings, and being suspended and balanced
in an awkward and unstable manner. The old
and my fellow passengers; an old man, and
a young one. This is a great deal of
the way in the house. The precise length of
the passage. I walked it out off the side
and looking the ground as the one of a
half an hour's walk. The old lady
cried out "My God!" and the young one screamed.
I caught hold of them both, the old lady
out opposite, and the young one on my left,
and said: "We could help ourselves, but
we can be quiet and composed. Ray about

caution and stood upon the step. Looking down, I saw the bridge gone and nothing below me but the line of rail. Some people in the two other compartments were madly trying to plunge out at window, and had no idea that there was an open swampy field 15 feet down below them and nothing else! The two guards (one with his face cut) were running up and down on the down side of the bridge (which was not torn up) quite wildly. I called out to them "Look at me. Do stop an instant and look at me, and tell me whether you don't know me." One of them answered "We know you very well, Mr. Dickens." "Then" I said "my good fellow for God's sake give me your key, and send one of those labourers here, and I'll empty this carriage"—We did it quite safely, by means of a plank or two and when it was done I saw all the rest of the train except the two baggage cars, down in the stream. I got into the carriage again for my brandy flask, took off my travelling hat for a basin, climbed down the brickwork, and filled my hat with water. Suddenly I came upon a staggering man covered with blood (I think he must have been flung clean out of his carriage) with such a frightful cut across the skull that I could n't bear to look at him. I poured some water over his face, and gave him some to drink, and gave him some brandy, and laid him down on the grass, and he said "I am gone" and died afterwards. Then I stumbled over a lady lying on her back against a little pollard tree, with the blood streaming over her face (which was lead color) in a number of distinct little streams from the head. I asked her if she could swallow a little brandy, and she just nodded, and I gave her

some and left her for somebody else. The next time I passed her, she was dead. Then a man examined at the Inquest yesterday (who evidently had not the least remembrance of what really passed) came running up to me and implored me to help him find his wife, who was afterwards found dead. No imagination can conceive the ruin of the carriages, or the extraordinary weights under which the people were lying, or the complications into which they were twisted up among iron and wood, and mud and water.

I don't want to be examined at the Inquest, and I don't want to write about it. It could do no good either way, and I could only seem to speak about myself, which of course I would rather not do. I am keeping very quiet here. I have a—I don't know what to call it—constitutional (I suppose) presence of mind, and was not in the least fluttered at the time. I instantly remembered that I had the Ms. of a N^o with me, and clambered back into the carriage for it. But in writing these scanty words of recollection I feel the shake and am obliged to stop.

Ever faithfully,
C. D.

Dickens received no injury, but he never recovered from the nervous shock and often referred in later years to the effect upon his system. Every Dickens lover will remember what he says of it in the postscript to *Our Mutual Friend*:

On Friday the Ninth of June in the present year, Mr. and Mrs. Boffin (in their manuscript dress of receiving Mr. and Mrs. Lammle at breakfast) were on the South-Eastern Railway with me, in a terribly destructive accident. When I had done what I could to help others, I climbed back into my carriage—nearly turned over a viaduct; and caught aslant upon the turn—to extricate the worthy couple. They were much soiled, but otherwise unhurt. The same happy result attended Miss Bella Wilfer on her wedding day, and Mr. Riderhood inspecting Bradley Headstone's red neckerchief as he lay asleep. I remember with devout thankfulness that I can never be much nearer parting company with my readers for ever, than I was then, until there shall be written against my life the two words with which I have this day closed this book:—THE END."

Strangely enough the postscript quoted was criticised with severity. In the *Westminster Review* of April, 1866, it was dealt with in this savage fashion:

We believe that all England would have been deeply shocked had Mr. Dickens been killed in the Staplehurst accident. But many minds will be equally shocked by the melodramatic way in which he speaks of his escape. Those who are curious to understand the tricks of his style should analyse the last section. He first endeavours to raise a joke about Mr. and Mrs. Lammle, "in their manuscript dress," and his other fictitious characters being

rescued from the railway carriage, and then turns off to moralise and improve upon his own escape, concluding the whole with a theatrical tag about "The End," which refers both to the conclusion of the book and his life. We write this in no carping spirit, but because it so fully explains to us the cause of Mr. Dickens's failures—a want of sincerity, and a determination to raise either a laugh or a tear at the expense of the most sacred of things.

The mind that could conceive that comment must have been a curious one; fancy the mental condition of a man who was as much shocked by what he thought a blunder in taste as by the sudden and violent death of a fellow-creature!

A very pleasant book is the *Life* of Shirley Brooks by G. S. Layard, called "A Great Punch Editor." In 1856 "Shirley was now a sufficiently imposing figure in the literary world to attract the attention of the autograph hunters," Mr. Layard informs us, and he gives a letter from Horace Mayhew with an endorsement by Brooks in which the latter remarks: "What would the world give for two such hautographs?" In the *Life* is quoted this to a Mr. W. H. Doeg:

THE TEMPLE.

Oct. 22nd, 1858.

DEAR SIR:

I am not a "distinguished man" but the distinguished service which *you* did in the days of Saul, commemorated in the 18th verse of the 22d chapter of the first book of Samuel, precludes me from disobeying your desire.

I am, dear Sir,

Your obedient servant,

SHIRLEY BROOKS

MR. DOEG.

Edom &c. &c.

The reference is to Doeg the Edomite who "fell upon the priests and slew . . . fourscore and five persons that did wear the linen ephod." Later, it seems, attacks from autograph seekers "became something of a nuisance, but he could never find it in his heart to refuse their flattering, though troublesome demands." In his Diary for 1871 Brooks made an entry which his biographer says "carries a wholesome lesson with it":

Somebody, Algernon O. Simon, London University, no, University College, writes for an autograph, but sends no envelope. Told him he owed me a penny, and was to pay it to the first ragged child he saw.

Layard regards this as "a model reply to the autograph hunter":

REGENT'S PARK.
Whit Tuesday, 1864.

SIR:

I am happy to hear that I have so many good qualities, as you assign to me, and I am, in addition,
Your obedient servant,

SHIRLEY BROOKS

A. VOGUE Esq.

One of my letters of Brooks is addressed to "Artemus Ward Esq." which the editor evidently thought was the real name of his new contributor. Mr. Layard tells us that "Ward" was one of the eighteen guests "at Shirley's hospitable board" on New Year's Eve, 1866,—seven months or so earlier than the date of this letter,—and proposed the health of his host in a characteristic speech; but this means of course the eve of New Year, 1867, as "Ward" did not reach England until June, 1866. The letter indicates that "Ward's" articles were at first not quite dull enough for *Punch*; and this is confirmed by what Brooks wrote to Frith, the artist, in September, 1866, saying, "I believe he [A. W.] sent in a contribu-

tion on some topic which Mark the Large [Lemon] thought would not be acceptable to the B. P. I have no reason to suppose that the series will be discontinued. But I don't know, and I don't care, which is more." But later the British Public, which is not always swift of judgment in matters of humour, "caught on to" Charles Farrar Browne, who, although he, died in March, 1867, won a fame in England which almost surpassed that which he enjoyed in his own country.

6 KENT TERRACE REGENT'S PARK, N. W.
Aug 27, 1866.

MY DEAR SIR:

I have not had (but hope for) the pleasure of making your personal acquaintance, but this being a business communication will need no apology. I am in charge of *Punch* during Mr. Mark Lemon's absence in France, & of course your MS came to me, and went from me to the printer. Your article appears in the new number—I enclose you the page, and the publication itself will be duly forwarded. If it suits you to send in "copy" by Thursday, there will be time for you to see your own proofs. I may just mention that you will see a word or two, in the first paragraph, not exactly as in M. S. an alteration made necessary by our finding it expedient never to kill babies out & out for the readers of *Punch*, an insular weakness for which you will make allowance. I expect Mr. Lemon

at the end of the week, and I shall probably have the pleasure of calling on you with him.

Believe me, my dear Sir,
Yours very truly,
SHIRLEY BROOKS.

ARTEMUS WARD Esq.

Buckle's *History of Civilisation* was once much talked about, but its fame might have been more enduring if he had written it in a much earlier time or in a much later time. This autobiographical letter is of interest chiefly because it convicts the accurate Sir Leslie Stephen of a slight error in his sketch in the *Dictionary of National Biography*, where the date of Buckle's birth is given as November 24, 1821.

LONDON, 30 April 1861—
59 OXFORD TERRACE, W.

SIR—

In answer to your letter, I beg to state that I was born on 24th November 1822. I have written nothing except the first volume of a History of Civilization; an Essay on the Influence of Women; and an Essay on Liberty. The two last were published with my name in *Frasers Magazine*. I have neither appointments nor preferments; nor are my opinions such as to make it probable that I shall obtain any, even supposing that I wished for them. My father was a merchant in the city of London. My mother was

a Miss Middleton belonging to the Yorkshire family of that name.

Should you require further information, I shall be happy to supply you with it.

I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Yours obediently,

HENRY THOMAS BUCKLE

I ought perhaps to have mentioned that the Essay on the Influence of Women was originally delivered as a Lecture at the Royal Institution in 1858.

This letter of Frederick Locker-Lampson is given because it supplies a new idea of a device to check the collecting habit when one is conscious that it is becoming oppressive.

NEW HAVEN COURT.

CROMER, 21 Sept.

SIR—

Thank you for y^r letter of the 18. I printed my Catalogue to make an end of my collecting, so you see it wd never do to think of yr proposal, however much I might be tempted.

Yrs,

F. L. L.

I doubt the efficacy of the remedy. I tried it myself once and it failed miserably. The printed list only made me see more clearly the gaps in the Collection. But it was a good excuse for Lampson to get rid of an undesirable applicant.

CHAPTER XI

A GROUP OF ENGLISH STATESMEN

Some English Statesmen—Cobden's letter to W. H. Osborn—Bright's letter to Greeley—Letters of Robert Lowe, Lord Sherbrooke—Sir Stafford Northcote to Cyrus W. Field—Lord Chancellors—Atlay's Victorian Chancellors—Eldon—Lyndhurst—Sugden to Brougham—Cranworth—Westbury—Campbell—Hatherly.

Two modern English statesmen must always be especially dear to Americans with memories, for they were our friends when we most needed staunch friendship and their countrymen—at least those of the ruling class—were by no means favourably disposed towards us. Richard Cobden and John Bright—I call them “modern,” although nothing is deemed to be modern now which is more than five years old—were champions of the cause against the enemies of the American Union.

Cobden, the great Freetrader and anti-corn-



Richard Cobden

From the engraving by Hollyer after a photograph by W. & D. Downey

law Radical, was such an admirer of the United States that he was accused of scheming to Americanise English institutions. An easy, accomplished, and convincing speaker, although not an orator of the order of Bright and Gladstone, he did not appeal to the passions of men but to their higher and nobler feelings. He knew America well and was fully qualified to arrive at sound opinions about our affairs. Justin McCarthy says:

In the time of the Civil War his whole sympathy went with the cause of the North, just as Palmerston's sympathies went with the cause of the South, but Cobden's cool judgment was never likely to be overborne by his sympathies, and he was able to make quiet comparison of the forces arrayed on either side. Cobden was convinced that the Federal States were destined to be the victors; Palmerston took it for granted that the Federal States were sure to be the vanquished.

Cobden was heartily detested by the old Conservatives, who thought that his opinions were destructive and revolutionary. What would they now think of Lloyd George?

This letter, written by Cobden to Mr. W. H. Osborn, formerly President of the Illinois

Central Railroad, was given to me by that gentleman's son, Mr. William Church Osborn. The views it expresses about paper money have come to be generally accepted but it needed a long campaign of education to convince the American voters of their soundness.

MIDHURST, 18 Feby. 1864.

MY DEAR MR. OSBORN—

I have not yet been to London to take my seat in the House this session. The weather is cold, night work does not suit me at this season of the year, & there is nothing particular coming on early. On the whole, I have passed through the winter very well & am better than usual.

Mr. Cyrus Field writes to tell me that he is the bearer of the book you were so kind as to send for my daughter Nellie. It has not yet reached us, but she begs me to thank you in advance for what she is sure is a beautiful present.

The diplomatic correspondence between our countries has been published, & the result is I hope to show that we are safe for the present from the breakers. There is nothing at issue between the two countries which will not keep. All parties here join in awarding praise to Mr. Adams for the ability, discretion, & temper with which he conducted his very difficult diplomacy during the last year. I am not disposed to criticise Lord Russell. I am satisfied with the result.

You allude in your letter to the prosperity of your

operates like alcohol on the human system, & produces an excitement on the body politic which, like the stimulus of strong drink, though it imparts an artificial energy for the moment, is sure to leave a corresponding prostration at the end. - We read glowing accounts of the prosperity of the country & the extravagance in your great cities. - Nobody seems prepared for the revolution which must follow. - I am afraid of the consequences on your politics & almost your institutions. - If you have to encounter a high price of food it will prove a most serious & unmanageable element in your national finances. - "I am afraid you will consider me a croaker."

My wife & family join
me in kind remembrance to Mrs. Cobden
& the good circle of the Shreps
Hereby me devotedly
Reverend

finances. I am sorry there is nobody to tell the parties the plain truths. You are producing less in consequence of the war, & are spending through the government for unproductive purposes an unparalleled amount. Now, if the people in their individual capacities were living on short rations, & spending less on their clothing & other outlays, they might by their restricting their expenses save as much as would meet the government wastes, & thus, by anticipating the effects of the war, avert a great future privation & difficulty. But the effects of the paper money operating like alcohol on the human system, & producing an excitement on the body politic which like the stimulus of strong drink, though it imparts an artificial energy for the moment, is sure to leave a corresponding prostration at the end. We read glowing accounts of the prosperity of the country & the extravagance of your great cities. Nobody seems prepared for the revulsion which must follow. I am afraid of the consequences on your politics & almost your institutions. If you have to encounter a high price of food it will prove a most serious & unmanageable element in your national finances. I am afraid you will consider me a croaker.

My wife & family join me in kind remembrances to Mrs. Osborn & the good wishes of the Sturgis
& believe me yours truly,
R. COBDEN

Peel thought that John Bright was a more single-minded man than Cobden and that he had done what he did for the repeal of the

corn duty for the sake of the people and not for his own. Lord Ellenborough (the son of the Chief Justice) said of the two men: "I confess I think they were both unsuited to the present constitution of the country, and that they had a strange longing for something more on the American model." That seemed to the aged Tory a grave accusation, but somehow we cannot look upon it with the horror expected of us. One's imagination falters in the attempt to fancy old Ellenborough's feelings if he had lived to contemplate the political condition of England to-day.

This letter of Bright to Horace Greeley was printed, of course, in the *Tribune* shortly after its receipt. Even to a man who supported McClellan in 1864 it appears to be a wise and certainly a friendly one.

ROCHDALE, Oct^r 1, 1864.

DEAR SIR:—

For more than three years the people of this country have watched with a constant interest, the progress of the great conflict in which your people have been engaged, and, as you know, some have rejoiced over the temporary successes of the enemies of your Govt. and some have deeply lamented them.



John Bright

At this moment we turn our eyes rather to the political than to the military struggle, and there is with us the same difference of opinion & of sympathy as regards your coming Presidential Election that has been manifested in connexion with your contest in the field.

All those of my countrymen who have wished well to the rebellion, who have hoped for the break-up of your Union, who have preferred to see a Southern Slave Empire rather than a restored & free Republic, so far as I can observe, are now in favor of the election of General McClellan. All those who have deplored the calamities which the leaders of Secession have brought upon your country—who believe that slavery weakens your power & tarnishes your good name throughout the world, & who regard the restoration of your Union as a thing to be desired & prayed for by all good men, so far as I can judge, are heartily longing for the re-election of Mr. Lincoln. Every friend of your Union probably, in Europe—every speaker & writer who has sought to do justice to your cause since the war began, is now hoping with an intense anxiety that Mr. Lincoln may be placed at the head of your Executive for another term.

It is not because they believe Mr. Lincoln to be wiser or better than all other men in your Continent—but they think they have observed in his career a grand simplicity of purpose & a patriotism which knows no change, & which does not falter. To some of his countrymen there may appear to have been errors in his course. It would be strange indeed if in the midst of difficulties so stupendous & so unexpected, any administration or any Ruler should wholly avoid mistakes. To us looking on from this distance

and unmoved by the passions from which many of your People can hardly be expected to be free,—regarding his Presidential path with the calm judgment which belongs rather to History than to the present time, as our outside position enables us, in some degree, to regard it,—we see in it an honest endeavor faithfully to do the work of his great office, and in the doing of it a brightness of personal honor on which no adversary has yet been able to fix a stain.

I believe that the effect of Mr. Lincoln's re-election in England & in Europe, & indeed throughout the world, will be this—it will convince all men that the integrity of your great country will be preserved & it will show that Republican Institutions *with an instructed and patriotic people* can bear a nation safely & steadily through the most desperate perils.

I am one of your friends in England who have never lost faith in your cause. I have spoken to my countrymen on its behalf, & now in writing this letter to you I believe I speak the sentiments & the heart's wish of every man in England who hopes for the freedom & greatness of your country. Forgive me for this intrusion upon you, but I cannot hold back from telling you what is passing in my mind & I wish if possible to send you a word of encouragement.

Believe me always with great respect,

Yours very truly,

JOHN BRIGHT

HORACE GREELEY Esq.

NEW YORK—U. S.

Even in England, few now remember Robert Lowe, Viscount Sherbrooke, although

29 John Bright
Rev. Solid Rochdale, Oct. 1. 1864.

Dear Sir,

For more than three years, the people of this Country have watched, with a constant interest, the progress of the great conflict in ^{which} your people have been ~~and~~ engaged, and, as you know, some have rejoiced in the temporary successes of the enemies of your Govt, and some have deeply lamented them.

At this moment, we turn our eyes rather to the political than to the military struggle, and there is, with us, the same difference of opinion & of sympathy, as regards your coming Presidential Election, that has been manifested in connexion with your Contest in the field.

All those of my Countrymen who have wished well to the ~~Union~~ rebellion, - who have hoped for the break-up of your Union, - who have preferred to see a Southern Slave Empire rather than a restored & free Republic, so far as I can observe, are now in favor of the election of General McClellan. All those who have deplored the calamities which the leaders of Secession have brought upon your Country, - who believe that Slavery

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Forgive me for this intrusion upon you, but I
cannot hold back from telling you what is
passing in my mind, & I wish, if possible,
to send you a word of encouragement.

Believe me always, with great respect,

~~Yours~~ I am, Sir, Yours, &c. &c.

John Bright

Horace Greeley &c.
New-York,
U.S.

he was more brilliant than either Bright or Cobden. "It requires," says Mr. Bryce, "an effort to believe that he was at one time held the equal in oratory and the superior in intellect of Mr. Bright and Mr. Gladstone." But he had disappeared from the minds of men when, in 1892, in his eighty-second year, he passed out of life. With all his great powers of mind, he was not well fitted for leadership, and he had neither the disposition nor the ability to coax, flatter, and humour "the masses." He was persistently hostile to Disraeli, and was the one man in London with whom that strange semi-Oriental personage "would not shake hands." He said of Disraeli that "English was, after all, his native language." This letter, written to a friend in 1876, is in some degree expressive of his sentiments.

SHERBROOKE, CATERHAM.

Sept. 27, '76.

MY DEAR JAMES—

I am glad you approve. I am much grieved at Dizzy for saying that the great mass of opinion in England is against his policy and that he means to adhere to it. As they say in America—That's not

democratic. I am also afflicted to think that we submit to such treatment and that the policy of the Nation is to depend not on the will of the Nation but on the will of one Israelite in whom there is much guile.

Believe me—

Very truly yours,

ROBERT LOWE

His speeches were full of sarcasm. Justin McCarthy in his *Portraits of the Sixties* compares Lowe's satirical style with that of Lord Westbury, asserting that while Lowe was effective, he was not quite as effective as Richard Bethell. I quote:

He jibed and jeered at his opponents in rasping tones suited to the words. The listener was amused and delighted but never surprised. Lowe was going in avowedly and obviously for making his antagonists feel uncomfortable and angry. The tone, the manner, the glances, and the gestures were all in keeping with that kind of purpose. There was no charm of surprise or contrast about it.

During the pendency of the Gladstone Reform Bill of 1866 he wrote as follows:

36 LOWNDES SQUARE.

March 26, 1866.

MY DEAR MELVILLE:—

I cannot tell what the effect of Gladstone's speech will be on the public, but I know what effect it ought to have on members of Parliament. It is a simple

avowal that finding statistics against him he throws them aside and relies on our common humanity and Christianity principles which have at least the advantage of being independant of figures. There is no profit in trying to prove the real meaning of the Bill. It stands confessed as an attempt to effect a complete change of Political Power from Education to Ignorance, from Property to poverty. Those who pay the taxes will not impose them, those who impose them will not pay them. Free Trade is to be handed over to people notoriously inclined to protection, Peace to people ever ready to go to war for an idea and Individual liberty to people who tolerate no difference of opinion from their own. Lord Grosvenor is threatened with the loss of his estate, the House of Commons with physical force and the rest of us are bespattered with the coarsest abuse while no attempt is made to answer our arguments.

It is very hard that I who possess so very small a stake in this land should have to fight this battle against the very men who will be the first victims of the coming change.

People long for land just as much here as in America, only there the longing can be satisfied without an agrarian Law—here it cannot. Property exists here because we are able to curb the majority but give them the power of government and who shall curb them then? People seem to forget that they can be just as effectually robbed by Law as by violence and that the whole question is, who are to make the Laws.

Believe me always,

Very sincerely yours,

R. LOWE

He opposed the Gladstone bill with great force and ability, and was one of the so-called "Adullamites" who seceded from the Liberals on that issue. It is conceded that his speeches contributed more to its defeat than any other cause. Yet, strange to say, the result was the reverse of what he most longed to accomplish. The bill of 1866 was mild in comparison with that of 1867, which was carried by the Tories "beguiled by Mr. Disraeli." "Thus," says Bryce, "Robert Lowe as much as Disraeli and Gladstone may in a sense be called an author of the tremendous change which has passed upon the British Constitution since 1866."

"Well, we must educate our masters," said Lowe after the bill had become a law. His prophecies of the ultimate effect of the extension of the suffrage were far too gloomy, thought Mr. Bryce in 1903; but much has occurred since 1903 to convince us that the evils he predicted were not fanciful. He was no believer in the "democracy" falsely so called, preached by the demagogues.

We were warned fifty years ago, [writes Mr. G. W. E. Russell in 1901] to remember that democracy means a government, not merely by numbers of isolated individuals, but by a *demos*—by men accustomed to live in *demoi*, or corporate bodies, and accustomed, therefore, to the self-control, obedience to law, and self-sacrificing public spirit without which a corporate body cannot exist. "A democracy of mere numbers is no democracy, but a mere brute 'arithmocracy,' which is certain to degenerate into an 'othlocracy,' [*sic*] or government by the mob, in which the members have no real share; and oligarchy of the fiercest, the noisiest, the rashest, and the most shameless, which is surely swallowed up, either by a despotism, as in France, or, as in Athens, by utter national ruin and hopeless slavery to a foreign invader."

When Sir Stafford Northcote, a scholarly and clear-minded statesman, came to the United States in 1871 with the Marquis of Ripon and Professor Montague Bernard to arrange for the settlement of the Alabama Claims question, a banquet was given to the Commission by Cyrus W. Field; and years later, Field, never unmindful of his own great services in the matter of the Atlantic Cable, applied to Northcote—then Lord Iddesleigh—for his views on the value

of the cable in the negotiations for arbitration. Northcote made this rather cautious but very sensible reply:

OSBORNE—

July 23, 1885.

DEAR MR. FIELD:—

I am truly sorry that an engagement of very long standing prevents my attending your dinner on the 5th August.

You ask me whether we found the Atlantic Cable of use during the Washington negotiations. There can be no doubt that it was a main agent in the matter. We usually met our American colleagues at midday, and we were by that time in possession of the views of our Home Government as adopted at their Cabinet in the afternoon of the same day. I am sometimes heretic enough to doubt whether such very rapid and constant communication is of unmixed advantage in the conduct of a negotiation; but undoubtedly there are frequently occasions when it is almost essential to have the means of exchanging ideas with only a few minutes' or at most a few hours' delay instead of at intervals of weeks.

Believe me,

Yours faithfully,

IDDESLEIGH

CYRUS W. FIELD Esq.

Sir Stafford was fortunate in having Andrew Lang for his biographer. Lang tells us that in the negotiations in Washington the English

were fighting a triangular or even a quadrilateral duel, for they had to hold their own not only with the Americans, but with the Home Government and the representative of Canada. He adds this Langian touch: "The Home Government kept putting in their oar, and once—for which much may by literary persons be forgiven them—they telegraphed that, in the treaty, they would *not* endure adverbs between 'to' (the sign of the infinitive) and the verb. The purity of the English language they nobly and courageously defended." This may have been one of the reasons why Sir Stafford did not regard the cable as an unmixed blessing.

Northcote was "too sweetly reasonable" to become a great leader. So optimistic was his disposition that one of his supporters cried out, "Hang that fellow Northcote! he's always seeing blue sky!" He was not one of that sort of leader so common of late who first convince the public that everything is wrong, and then that they are the only persons who can set everything right.

The lives of the Lord Chancellors of England

may not afford to the general reader as much interest as those of kings and warriors, but to lawyers and to students of English legal and political history they are full of fascination. Lord Campbell, however untrustworthy he may be as an historian, deserves our gratitude for giving to the world the biographies of the Chancellors from the earliest times to the days of Lyndhurst and Brougham; his failings, particularly those displayed in his sketches of the two last mentioned Chancellors, are so well understood that an intelligent reader is not likely to be misled by them, and he will find them undeniably entertaining.

The work of Mr. J. B. Atlay (*The Victorian Chancellors*) is of a different order, and while it is entertaining it is devoid of the appearance of personal or partisan prejudice. Prepared according to the methods of modern biography, it betrays no bias and gives us assurance of the author's fairness and freedom from petty jealousies or antipathies. He is careful to say that his undertaking "makes no claim to be regarded as a continuation" of Campbell's series. He treats of the thir-

teen Chancellors who occupied the woolsack between 1837 and 1901, and adds Brougham, not technically a Victorian Chancellor, because of his intimate connection with the fortunes of his successors and with the affairs of the Victorian period. Of the subjects of these biographies the greater number were extraordinary men physically as well as intellectually; their longevity has been a frequent cause of comment. Most of them were laborious in the extreme, but their mental toil seems to have acted as a preservative. St. Leonards (Sugden), perhaps the most learned of them all, lived to be ninety-two; Lyndhurst, the most brilliant, to be ninety-one; Brougham, the most versatile, to be eighty-nine; Chelmsford to be eighty-four, Selborne to be eighty-two, and Halsbury still survives (1912), vigorous at eighty-seven. Cottenham died at seventy, Truro and Westbury at seventy-three, Cranworth at seventy-seven, Hatherly at nearly eighty, and Campbell at eighty-one. Cairns and Herschell were the youngest, the former dying at sixty-four and the latter at sixty-one, but Cairns

early developed the seeds of consumption and Herschell was the victim of an unfortunate accident while visiting the United States. In length of service, Lord Halsbury leads them all with a total of seventeen years, and St. Leonards had the shortest tenure, only about ten months.

My Eldon autographs are mostly official. This letter must have been written in 1816, as that was the year when Abbott (afterwards Lord Tenterden) was appointed a puisne Judge of the Common Pleas.

MY DEAR LORD:—

I have not got the Prince's consent, nor his Warrant, of Com^a for H. I appointed Abbott two days ago to be sworn in tomorrow—Ser^t and Judge—& I presume his Society, himself &c. are all prepared.—I really do not know, now, how to interfere.—I was ignorant of the fact of seniority at the bar, the appointment of Abbott having been first certified to him & even before Dampier's death. I do not think that, on account of the mere seniority at the bar, I can, in the actual circumstances, interpose, now, to make his, the first notified appointment, the latter in order. That seems very awkward, and tho' I regret this thing about the seniority, I feel it that it would be very uncomfortable to intimate to Abbott that that, which is in substance the first appointment,

should now be converted into the second. I dont know how to propose it to A. after what has passed. *I hope* tomorrow will bring me some answer from the Prince, but I am by no means, after what I have heard today, sure of it.

Yrs most truly,

ELDON

I am just this moment come home.

Brougham wrote many letters and my examples are numerous, but none of them possess much interest. His handwriting was atrocious. A writer in the *Spectator* says:

Charles Knight describes the undignified rush of Lord Chancellor Brougham from his robing room to the woosack with grave officials puffing scandalised after him. The characteristics of Brougham's handwriting, as we see it here, are just the same; it is a hasty, dashing scrawl, the words have been thrown at the paper, instead of being written upon it, and have stuck there as they best could without assistance.

Lord Cottenham also wrote an abominable hand; Lyndhurst's is more legible. This extract from a manuscript opinion illustrates the natural disposition of a lawyer (which laymen consider to be so reprehensible) to advise a client less with reference to the merits of the controversy than to the chances of winning the cause.

I am for the reasons above given clearly of opinion that the Deft. ought not to demur, and as to the plea of non est factum, I think it not improbable that it will be proved at the trial (& the Deft has no evidence to the contrary) that the alteration was made *before* the execution of the Bond. In fact the deft. in this respect seems to be completely in the power of Britain. There is therefore considerable hazard in defending the action, and I think it by much the most *prudent* course to settle it by payment of the debt and costs.

J. COPLEY

TEMPLE, Decr 23, 1815—

Sugden was a great lawyer but he did not always study his briefs, and on one occasion in the Vice-Chancellor's Court he argued one side of a case before he found out that he had been retained and briefed by the other side. It was Sugden who made the famous remark about Brougham, that if he only knew a little law he would know a little of everything. His legal writings, especially his treatise on the Law of Vendors and Purchasers, have always been considered of the highest authority, although Mr. Bryce said that they were "a mere accumulation of details unilluminated and unrelieved by any statement of general principles, and that, in literary

style no less than in the cast and quality of his intellect, he is hard and crabbed."

When he died his will could not be found although the eight codicils were safe in his tin-box. Thereupon a thing thitherto unheard of happened: the court allowed the contents of the lost will to be proved by the oral testimony of the daughter.

This letter, written when he was Chancellor, shows the interest he felt in the improvement of the Chancery Court. Bellenden Ker, of whom he speaks, was a prominent law reformer. Although his term of office was brief, Sugden succeeded in procuring the passage of his bills for the amendment of chancery and common-law procedure.

BOYLE FARM—

4th Sept. 1852.

MY DEAR LORD BROUGHAM:

I was in possession of Bellenden Ker's paper and of the substance of your correspondence with Lyndhurst when all the other papers were under my review. I readily adopt your suggestion to commence with "offences against the person." Lyndhurst has given me the same advice altho' on different grounds.

Your other suggestions have not been lost sight of. I have had the subject of the County Courts

& of the Bankruptcy Courts repeatedly under consideration. I am sorry to say that I have taken a view of the subjects which does not altogether agree with yours although as we have the same object in view it is not I hope likely that we should ultimately disagree and I need not assure you how much value I set upon your opinion. Indeed both of the Courts may be said to be entitled [*sic*] to you for their creation.

I have offered All Saints & St. Julian's, Norwich, (230^l a year without a House) to your friend Mr. Gurney. He has not as you supposed thrown up his small living and had to pay for dilapidations but he retains it and being there without a House has obtained the consent of the Bishop & myself to the erection of a House. However I hope this living will suit him better.

The living of All Saints has come to the Crown by lapse and the incumbent is an immoral person who is rejected by his Parishioners & the Bishop and forced to live abroad so that it is quite right to fill it up. But the vacancy has led to a great scandal and very much alarmed me. A clergyman who was aware of the lapse *sold the knowledge of the fact for 1000^l* to another clergyman who wanted preferment for his son and the father of the latter then applied to me for the Living. I have submitted the case to the Diocesan. Believe me,

My dear Lord Brougham,

Ever truly yours,

ST LEONARDS

[Addressed—The LORD BROUGHAM, BROUGHAM CASTLE, PENRITH]

The concluding portion of the letter is a striking commentary on the condition of the Anglican Church in the middle of the nineteenth century. We cannot wonder that men like Leslie Stephen could not remain in its ministry.

This letter of Lord Cranworth has an autographic bearing.

20 UPPER BROOK ST.

21 May, 1865.

MY DEAR MR. PANIZZI—

My friend Addington who has lately returned from Italy met at Florence the American sculptor Mr. Powers who is making a head of our Saviour.

Among the data on which he was forming his notion of what the expression of the countenance ought to be was a letter in English purporting to be a letter from "Publius Lentulus, President of Judea at the time when the fame of Jesus Christ began to spread abroad" The letter was said to have been removed by Bonaparte from the Vatican to Paris & Addington could not ascertain whether it was written in Greek or Latin. Do you know anything on the subject? I shd be glad of any information you can give me on the subject. Yours very truly,

CRANWORTH

This is not remarkably clear for a Chancellor. If the letter was "in English," how

could it have been "in Greek or Latin"? No doubt he meant that Powers was working from an English copy of a supposed original.

When Cranworth at seventy-five was made Chancellor for the second time, some kind friend—it is whispered that it was the Queen, but Mr. Atlay does not believe it—congratulated him saying, "Well, Cranny, Kingsley is right, it *is* better to be good than clever." But Lord Selborne thought that Rolfe was one of the best Chancellors he had ever known, and even Campbell, whose judgments were apt to be severe, testified to "his unsullied honour, his warmth of heart, his instinctive rectitude of feeling, his legal acquirements, his patient industry, and his devoted desire to do his duty." Westbury, however, was of a different mind and when some one remarked to him, "I wonder why old Cranny always sits with the Lords Justices," replied: "I take it to arise from a childish indisposition to be left alone in the dark."

But Richard Bethell always had a bitter speech on the tip of his tongue—one reason why when he resigned his office under a cloud

he did not get much real sympathy. One of his letters, brief as it is, has a fling against Lord Salisbury. He seldom gave the year when he dated his letters.

HOUSE OF LORDS, May 12—

DEAR LORD JUSTICE—

Your idea of the proper addition to Lord Salisbury's foolish declaration was an excellent one. If there had been time I wd have given notice of an amendment on the report.

Yours sincerely,
WESTBURY

The LORD JUSTICE JAMES—

When Campbell became Chancellor at eighty, Lyndhurst made what Mr. Atlay calls "a most felicitous quotation" over the attainment by Campbell of everything he had ever looked forward to: "We may say of him, in the words of the poet:

'Thou hast it now, King, Cawdor, Glamis, all,
As the weird woman promised.'"

Mr. Atlay reminds us however that the unquoted words following are:

and I fear
Thou playd'st most foully for it.

One of my Campbell letters refers to his *Lives of the Chancellors.*"

MY DEAR SIR:

I trust you are much better though you do not mention your health. I shall do very well with Gardiner. But I should be glad to have any experiences respecting his successor, Archbishop Heath. Then you must supply me with materials for Sir Nicholas Bacon, Sir Christopher Hatton, Sir John Puckering, & Lord Ellesmere which will bring me down to Lord Bacon. I remain

Yours faithfully,

CAMPBELL

He wrote a very ladylike hand, as did Grover Cleveland and General Winfield Scott.

Patient, acute, and painstaking, William Page Wood, Lord Hatherly, was not one of the great Chancellors. It was said in regard to him: "When he who has too little piety is impossible and he who has too much is impracticable, he who has equal piety and ability becomes Lord Chancellor." This letter of his was written when he was approaching eighty, in the small, feeble characters of an aged man with impaired eyesight—very

unlike the bold handwriting of a note written in 1872. His promise of an annual contribution did not involve him in much expense, for he died in less than three months.

32 GT GEORGE ST.
April 16, 1881.

DEAR LADY SELBORNE—

I thank you for your confidence in my attachment to P. M. W. & gladly would I undertake to pay £30 per annum during *my* life & the continuance of his work at St. Thomas. I cannot promise anything after my death. I have already provided annuities by my will to extend the amount of which might embarrass me with reference to relatives & others, while my means of satisfying them will be less.

I shall call to leave this in the hope of seeing you for a few minutes. In the mean time I will express my hope that the Chancellor & yourself will enjoy some holiday before the long work of the session commences in the Lords. With best regards to him & yourself, believe me

Yours very sincerely,
HATHERLY

The LADY SELBORNE.

A study of English jurisprudence leads one to believe that the general administration of equity was not benefited by that practical system of the "recall" under which a change

of the Ministry necessitates a change of Chancellors. The judicial functions of the Chancellor are at this time of so little importance when compared with what they were in former days, that it is now a matter of little consequence.

CHAPTER XII

COLONIAL NOTABLES

Colonial Governors: Bellingham; Sir Francis Bernard—Revolutionary; Sir Guy Carleton; Nathanael Greene; Richard Henry Lee—Literary: Bret Harte; Whittier; Bayard Taylor.

THE autographs of American Colonial Governors are well esteemed by American collectors, and the supply is not very plentiful. Some of the letters are fairly interesting but the documents are more numerous and their interest is chiefly historical. One of mine appears to have some connection with the hostility of the early settlers of New England to the habit of wearing long hair. It is an affidavit sworn to before Richard Bellingham, afterwards Governor of Massachusetts:

I Jonathan Lambert aged about twenty yeares, deposeth and saith that coming in the ship Blossum, Mr. John Trumble comander after the shallop came

abord I heard two of them say that thay shaved
thare heads and further this deponent saith not dated
ye 25th 4:1662. Sworn ye sd day

R. BELLINGHAM Dep Gov—

Bellingham was Deputy Governor for thirteen years and Governor for ten years. When in 1641 he married for the second time, it is related that "a young gentleman was about to be contracted to a friend of his, when on a sudden the governor treated with her and obtained her for himself." This was reversing the Miles Standish precedent. We are further told that the banns were not published properly, and that he performed the marriage ceremony himself. Bellingham was evidently a vigorous opponent of long hair. There is a document extant—I have only a printed copy—dated in 1649, signed by him as well as by Governor Endicott, Deputy Governor Thomas Dudley, and others as Magistrates, beginning:

Forasmuch as the wearing of long hair after the manner of Russians and barbarous Indians, has begun to invade New England, contrary to the rule of God's word, which says it is a shame for a man to wear long hair,

as also the commendable custom of all the Godly of all our nation until within these few years—

He ends by entreating the elders “to take care that the members of their respective churches be not defiled therewith.”

Trevelyan in his *History of the American Revolution* says of Francis Bernard, Governor of New Jersey from 1758 to 1760 and of Massachusetts from 1760 to 1769: “Since Machiavelli undertook to teach the Medici how principalities might be governed and maintained, no such body of literature was put on paper as that in which Sir Francis Bernard (for his services procured him a baronetcy) instructed George the Third and his Ministers in the art of throwing away a choice portion of a mighty Empire.” Yet Bernard began well and bade fair to be a popular Governor. So highly was he at first esteemed in Massachusetts that the Assembly presented to him several addresses signifying their regard for him, and also voted to him a grant of Mount Desert Island—so that he might as well have given his name to

what is now Bar Harbor as to a township in Somerset County, New Jersey. His letter shows that in the second year of his service he enjoyed the favour of the colonists without abatement; but it also exhibits some traits of character which foretell disaster, and a lack of appreciation of the actual "popular spirit."

CASTLE WILLIAM, Aug. 8, 1761—

DEAR S^r

I am ashamed to see how long your last favor has laid by me unacknowledged; and yet it has been my misfortune rather than my fault. A wrong headed & ill advised Custom House officer had created so much trouble in his own & other public offices that It has required all my attention to keep the flame under. And this has engaged me in such a deal of ungracious writing, that I am greatly behindhand not only in my private but also in my public correspondence. But as I now contrive to spend a good part of my time in this retreat (which is on an Island 3 miles from Boston) I hope soon to clear myself of my Epistolar Debts.

I have never ballanced more nicely upon any subject than I have upon the change of my Government; & my conclusion amounts to this: that in regard to myself it would not have been advisable; with a view of advantage to my children, it is for the better. The Increase of income affords no great weight in the scale, tho it will more than pay the increase of

Dear Sir

Castle William Aug 8. 1761

I am ashamed to see how long your favor has been by me unacknowledged: and yet it has been my misfortune rather than my fault. A wrong headed & ill advised custom-house officer has treated so much trouble in his own & other public offices, that it has required all my attention to keep the flame under. And this has engaged me in such a deal of ungracious writing, that I am greatly behind hand not only in my private but also in my public correspondence. But as I now continue to spend a good part of my time in this retreat (which is on an island 3 miles from Boston) I hope soon to clear myself of my Epistolary Debt.

I have never balanced more keenly upon any subject than I have upon the change of my Government: & my conclusion amounts to this: that in regard to myself it would not have been advisable: with a view of advantage to my children, it is for the better. The Increase of income allows so great weight on the scale, that it will more than pay the increase of expence; but it by no means will compensate for the addition of trouble, state & importance. I reckon on the minus side: I had full enough of them, (too much for a Philosopher) in my former Government, and of all things in life, did not want an increase of them.

Your most affectionate
& faithful servant

Fra. Bernard.

expence; but it by no means will compensate for the addition of trouble. State and importance I reckon on the minus side: I had full enough of them, (too much for a Philosopher) in my former Government, and of all things in Life, did not want an increase of them. Power I cannot entirely disclaim—because it makes part of my System to provide for my children. This is my chief View: I have immediately obtained a good opportunity of having my children well educated under my Eye & have a fair prospect of procuring good settlements for them when they are fit for it. And upon this account I cheerfully submit to State and Politicks, & endeavour to persuade myself that the Life is very tolerable.

This Province is very much altered from what it has been; the popular spirit is much subsided & the true Idea of the English Government begins to be well understood. Allmost All the Men whose Superior Talents or Fortunes lift them above the common People are friends to Government: the present Assembly is well filled with them. The Bone of Contention between the Governor & People is now removed by a compromise. The Salary indeed is granted annually; but then it is considered only as a form. It must be the first Act passed upon the opening of the Annual Assembly; & it is known that the Governor is instructed to pass no Act untill the Act for granting at least £1000 sterling to the Governor is sent up. So that it is now put upon the footing of a Convention, the breach of which must put a stop to all Business. In other matters the People observe their Compact with the Crown with more preciseness than in most other Governments. The independent

power of the Captain General in all military business is held inviolate: and the power of the Governor with advise of Council to issue all public money is strictly maintained. Both these Rights have broke in upon in New York & New Jersey & the encroachments are still insisted upon. All Commissions & officers in this Province are in the Gift of the Governor, the Military absolutely, the Civil with the advice of Council, which seldom or never opposes the Governor's Nominations. Upon the whole the Governor's power is sufficiently independant & the People, well enough disposed to promise a quiet Administration to a prudent & moderate Man.

Thus much for my Political Situation. My private Life I must reserve for another Letter at more leisure. The most pleasant account of me will be from this Castle, where I spend 4 or 5 days in the week during the summer in a very agreeable manner. I have here a most delightful apartment to which I am making some small additions to accommodate Mrs. Bernard who is very fond of this place. Here I am quite a private Gentleman, excepting a few Military honors upon relieving the guard &c. & excepting military business, which has been my case this month past, having been collecting & embarking 1000 provincials to relieve the regulars at Halifax.

I shall want to know how you fare amongst the changes & chances of this mortal life. You still superintend the Treasury of Ireland, & I understand are the Representative of Aylesbury. This last gives me pleasure, as I conclude from thence that you visit in a large House in that Neighbourhood, about which I have heretofore wandered & wished to see you

there. Wherever you are & whatever you do, you have my good wishes. Mrs. Bernard joins with me in compliments to Lady Ellis.

I am S^r

Your most affectionate & faithful servant,

FRN. BERNARD

It may be true that Sir Francis merely carried out a policy urged upon him by the Ministry and certain to arouse the colonists to revolt, but the *Dictionary of National Biography* asserts that this policy not only had his complete approval but "he succeeded in giving to its harsher features unnecessary prominence." "Indeed," says his biographer, "the line of action pursued by the home government was, to some extent, traceable to his unfavourable representations of the original designs and motives of the colonists, and his fatal deficiency in political tact and insight undoubtedly assisted to hasten the war."

From Colonial governors to generals of the Revolution is an easy transition. I select from the portfolios only three letters, for the British and American examples are so numer-

ous that they would occupy a volume by themselves. One of the letters is from that high-minded soldier, Sir Guy Carleton, who was devoted to the cause of England and is described as "firm, humane, and of the most unvarying courtesy under all circumstances." His conduct in America was in striking contrast with that of the Clintons, Howes, and Burgoyne. Bancroft maintains that Carleton was the cause of the failure of the Burgoyne campaign; that he originated the idea of that invasion, in order to gratify his personal ambition, and expecting to come down from Canada to assume general command in the colonies, since he ranked Sir William Howe; and that Howe, fearing supersession, refused to co-operate. If that be true, Carleton rendered to the Americans a service entitling him to their lasting gratitude; but the explanation is far-fetched and fanciful. Carleton did hope, at the outset, to be assigned to command the invading forces, but Germaine, his personal opponent, gave the honour to Burgoyne, and Carleton, taking what George III. pronounced to be "the only dignified part," resigned



Guy Carleton

Sir Guy Carleton

From an etching by H. B. Hall

Duplicate.

New York 6th June 1783.

Sir,

In my last to you of the 17th of April, by Cornet Schoenewald, I informed you, that I had intended, to send all the Brunswick Troops to Canada by the earliest opportunity, but that the changes in public affairs had rendered it impossible, to spare transports for that purpose. Innotwithstanding directed Major General Paterson to send to Canada, the "clothing, camp equipage, and other stores, of which your troops were in want, and hope they have arrived safe before this time.

Having on the 1st instant received the Kings commands, to send to Europe, without delay, all the German troops serving in this Army, I am preparing to comply therewith as soon as possible, and mean to send those belonging to the Duke of Brunswick in the first Embarkation. I have given the like directions respecting those now serving

Major General de Riedesel.

in the district of Nova Scotia. The whole
will proceed to the downs which is the ren-
derous appointed, and where they will
receive further orders. . .

sent in the original.

I transmit herewith a letter
from Lord North, which his Lordship de-
cided might be forwarded by the first
opportunity.

Some of the Brunswick Prisoners
still remain in New England, measures
have been taken for their speedy enlargement.
I shall say nothing more on this subject as
Lieutenant Penning, who is appointed of the
express going to Canada, will give you the
fullest information of every particular.

I am, Sir,

your most obedient and
most humble servant

Guy Carleton

his office as governor of Canada. When Lord North refused to accept the resignation, Carleton did his whole duty and loyally aided Burgoyne to the utmost. Howe had no reason to think that Carleton, of all officers, would supplant him. His habitual inaction sufficiently accounts for his conduct. This letter was written to Baron von Riedesel while Carleton was in command in New York, after the war was virtually over.

NEW YORK, 6th June, 1783.

SIR.

In my last to you of the 17th of April by Cornet Schoenewald I informed you that I had intended to send all the Brunswick Troops to Canada by the earliest opportunity but that the change in public affairs had rendered it impossible to spare transports for that purpose. I notwithstanding directed Major General Paterson to send to Canada the clothing, camp equipage, and other stores, of which your troops were in want, and hope they have arrived safe before this time.

Having in the 1st instant received the King's commands, to send to Europe, without delay, all the German troops serving in this Army, I am preparing to comply therewith as soon as possible, and mean to send those belonging to the Duke of Brunswick in the first Embarkation. I have given the like directions respecting those now serving in the district

of Nova Scotia. The whole will proceed to the downs which is the rendezvous appointed, and where they will receive further orders.

I transmit herewith a letter from Lord North which his Lordship desired might be forwarded by the first opportunity.

Some of the Brunswick Prisoners still remain in New England; measures have been taken for their speedy enlargements. I shall say nothing more on this subject as Lieutenant Rienking, who is apprised of the express going to Canada, will give you the fullest information of every particular.

I am, Sir,

Your most obedient and most humble servant,

GUY CARLETON

Major General RIEDESEL—

Another letter is from that sterling patriot and efficient officer, Nathanael Greene. In the winter of 1778-79 Washington's army was encamped at Middlebrook, New Jersey, on the Raritan River, not far from what is now Bound Brook. Towards the end of May, 1779, news came that the British were about to begin some important enterprise on the Hudson, and the troops were ordered to break camp and proceed by way of Morristown to the Highlands. The army began the march on June 2, 1779. A few days before that,



Nathanael

Nathanael Greene

From an engraving by R. Whitechurch, after the painting by R. Peale

Camp May 25th 1779

Sir

The General has given me orders to prepare to put the Army in a state to move if it should be found necessary - Let all the Markess Horsemen & Wall Fetti come down as soon as possible, also the Carriages which Mr Wayne wrote for some days since. Don't let an moments time be lost in sending forward the Horses. You will remember what I have wrote you respecting the General's orders should be kept a secret as the Enemy may take advantage of the intimation.

Mrs Greene & my compliments to Mrs

Abele

I am Sir

Your

Humble Serv

N Greene

2^{my}

Col Abele

Greene writes to Colonel James Abele, Deputy Quartermaster-General, who was stationed at Morristown:

CAMP, May 25, 1779.

SIR—

The General has given me orders to put the army in a state to move if it should be found necessary. Let all the Marquees, Horseman and Wall Tents come down as soon as possible; also the Canteens which Mr. Weese wrote for some days since. Don't let a moments time be lost in sending forward the stores. You will remember what I have wrote you respecting the General's orders should be kept a secret as the enemy may take advantage of the intimation.

Mrs. Greene & my compliments to Mrs. Abele.

I am sir

Your humble servt

N. GREENE

Q.M.G.

Col. ABELE—

A letter of Benedict Arnold to Governor George Clinton possesses a peculiar interest because it was written only a month before the treason was discovered. Arnold met André at the Robinson house on the night of September 21, 1780, and André was captured on the morning of September 23d.

HEADQUARTERS, ROBINSON'S HOUSE.
August 22nd 1780.

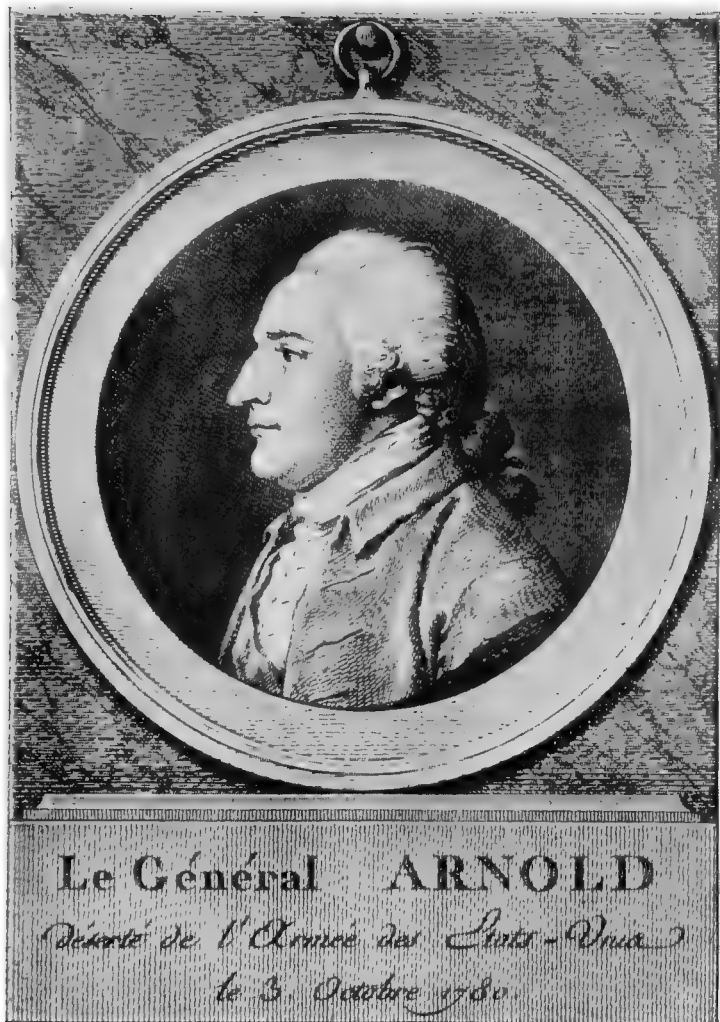
DEAR SIR:

In a letter of yesterday's date from Major Ville Franche Engineer at these Posts, I am informed that the middle part of the chain is sinking & in a very dangerous situation: that unless it be soon raised & secured it will not be in our power to do it, but at a great expence of labour & time. This cannot be done without timber, to haul which we are not supplied with teams.

I find it necessary also to inform you, sir, that many of the works & public buildings at these Posts are in a ruinous & perishing condition, and that besides securing & repairing them, it is not only expedient but absolutely necessary that a number of new barracks & buildings be erected & built before cold weather comes on, for the accommodation of the troops who are to remain in garrison here during the approaching winter, without which it will be impossible to have the Posts properly secured.

I am not furnished with half the number of teams for the daily works of the garrison, altho I have applied frequently to the Q. Master Genl. & to Colo. Hay to furnish them. In answer to my applications & pressing solicitations on the subject, I am informed by the Quarter Masters that they have horses, but neither carts, large waggons, or harness to spare for me, nor money to procure them with.

In this situation, sir, I am under the necessity of looking up to your Excellency for such assistance as it may be in your power or in that of this State to furnish me with, for securing Posts established at



Benedict Arnold

From an engraving by B. L. Provost after a drawing from life by
Du Simitier

Head Quarters Robinson's House
August 22. 1790.

Dear Sir

Your Letter of Yesterday's Date from
Major Little is in the possession of these Posts. I am informed
that the middle Part of the Chain is sending on a very
dangerous translation; that unless it is soon raised &
secured it will not be in our Power to do so, but at
a great Expence of Labour & Time. This cannot
be done without Timber, to build which we are not
supplied with Timbers.

I find it necessary also to inform You Sir
that many of the Works & powder Buildings at these Posts
are in a ruinous & perishing Condition; and that besides
securing & repairing these, it is not only expedient,
but absolutely necessary, that a number of new
Barracks & Buildings be erected & built before cold Weather
comes on, for the Accommodations of the Troops who are
to remain in Garrison here, during the approaching Winter,
without which it will be impossible to have the Posts
properly secured.

I am not furnished with half the number
of Timbers, for the steady Works of the Garrison, & this
I have applied frequently to the 2. Master Genl. & to Colo
Hay, to furnish them. In Answer to my Applications
expressing Solicitations on the Subject, I am informed by
the Quarter Masters, that they have a Horse, but neither
Carts, large Waggon or Harness, & assure me, how
much

No. Money to procure them with.

In this Situation Sir, I am under the necessity of looking up to Your Excellency, for such Assistance, as it may be in your Power or that of this State, to furnish me with, for securing Posts, established at such amazing Expence, & which are of such vast Importance to the United States, in general & to this in particular.

I therefore by the favor of Your Excellency, to grant to ^{the} ~~the~~ Agent for the State, such Power, as may be necessary and thus enabled to vest him with, for procuring by Impreg or otherwise, as many Farms, as may be necessary to carry on the Public Works to better advantage than, or at least sufficient to enable to secure those which are now in a decaying State and to construct ~~new~~ Buildings as are indispensably necessary.

By the late Appointment of Cole Picking to the Quarter Master General, (who is not arrived in camp.) Every Thing is become so much deranged in that Department, as to deprive me of all Hopes of seasonable Assistance from him; even if he has arrived soon & is furnished with the Resources for procuring Farms.

From this State of Facts Your Excellency will be enabled to judge of our Situation here, & I doubt not, will furnish us, with every Assistance in your Power.

I have the Honor to be, with the greatest regard

Your Excellency's most Obedt. & most Affct. Son

Wm. L. Clinton

Gov. Clinton.

B. Arnold

such amazing expence & which are of such vast importance to the United States in general & to this in particular.

I therefore beg the favor of your Excellency to grant to Colo. Hay, Agent for the State, such power as may be necessary and you enabled to vest him with, for procuring by impress or otherwise, as many teams as may be necessary to carry on the public works to advantage here, or at least sufficient to enable us to secure those which are now in a decaying state and to construct such buildings as are indispensably necessary.

By the late appointment of Colo. Pickering to the Quarter Master Generalcy (who is not arrived in camp) everything is become so much deranged in that Department as to deprive me of all hopes of seasonable assistance from him; even if he does arrive soon & is furnished with the necessaries for procuring teams.

From this state of facts your Excellency will be enabled to judge of our situation here, & doubt not will furnish us with every assistance in your power.

I have the honor to be, with the greatest regard

Your Excellency's most obedt & most hble servt,

B. ARNOLD

His Excellency Govr. CLINTON.

While we are on the subject of the Revolution, a letter of Richard Henry Lee may be quoted:

BALTIMORE, 17th Jany, 1777.

DEAR SIR:—I am favored with yours by Maj^r Johnston and I should certainly have served him to the

utmost of my power in Congress if the appointment you proposed for Mr. Johnston had not now been in another channel. You know, Sir, that by a late resolve of Congress—the General is to fill up all vacancies in the Continental troops that shall happen for six months from the date of the resolve. I have recommended it to the Major to get a letter from you and the council, with one from Colonel Harrison, to the General in his favor, and if he is very intent on success, to carry them himself. I think this will not fail to procure him the commission he desires, and in the mean time, the Lieutenants and Ensign may be recruiting the company. We have not heard from General Washington since the 5th instant when he was at Morris Town in West Jersey about 20 miles from Brunswick where the enemy keep their head quarters. But a Gentleman who arrived here yesterday, and who passed thro our army at Morris Town on the 8th says the men were in high spirits, that he thinks they were 12000 strong, that they were under marching orders and they were supposed to be going towards Elizabeth Town, which is between the main body of the enemy and New York. That Gen. Heath was to join them on the 9th with between 2 and 5 thousand men. That the Jersey militia had many skirmishes with the British troops and always beat them. That he met large bodies of militia on march to the Jersies, whence he concluded that the enemy must either quit that State soon or be exposed to great danger by remaining there. Unluckily our army consists almost entirely of militia whose stay is very uncertain, and renders the speedy coming up of regular troops

absolutely necessary. I am with very particular regard and esteem, dear Sir, your most obedient and most humble servant,

RICHARD HENRY LEE

The fame of Lee ought to have been more permanent. He was honoured in Virginia, he was noted for his eloquence, and he had all the opportunities for achieving immortality. He moved the resolution for the Declaration of Independence. But he seems to have had the unfortunate habit—which one of our great railway kings attributed to his own son-in-law—of “betting on the wrong horse.” He was of the cabal which opposed Washington, and he was hostile to the adoption of the Constitution. He had been willing to take office under the odious Stamp Law. In 1776 he was subjected to severe criticism because, anticipating the depreciation of the Continental money, he required his tenants to pay him in gold, silver, or tobacco—a most unfortunate act, which nearly lost him his seat in Congress. We are told that “plain, solid common-sense was the distinguishing characteristic of his mind,” but we can scarcely

believe it in view of his actions. His reputation as an orator was eclipsed by that of his friend Patrick Henry, who was intellectually his inferior, although Henry was antagonistic to the Constitution; and his eminence as a hero of the Revolution has been dwarfed by that of his great fellow-Virginian against whom he intrigued persistently but unsuccessfully.

Colonial governors and Revolutionary generals are well enough in their way, but the paths of literature are to me more attractive than those of colonial history. American literary autographs may not be so expensive as English ones, but many of them are fully as interesting. The first ones I find before me are those of Bret Harte, whose letters and manuscripts are becoming objects of special concern, if we may judge by the present prices they command.

A Life of Bret Harte published within the past year or so is well written but it is quite disappointing. It might well be called "Sketches of Early Days in California with incidental references to Bret Harte," and it

leaves an unpleasant impression of the character and career of the subject. The *Life* by T. Edgar Pemberton, published in 1903, is much more satisfactory in my way of thinking, although it may not be constructed so scientifically as its successor. One paragraph in Pemberton's book is especially amusing to a collector. Reference is made to a story that while Harte was living at Morristown he retained the postage stamps sent to him by people seeking his autograph and that these applications were so numerous that with the stamps thus obtained he paid his butcher's bill. Mr. Pemberton adds that "that slander has been denied *on the authority of the butcher.*"

"The Luck of Roaring Camp" first appeared in the *Overland Monthly* for August, 1868. Mr. Pemberton says:

After it was printed the return mail from the East brought a letter addressed to the "Editor of *The Overland Monthly*" enclosing a letter from Fields, Osgood & Co., the publishers of *The Atlantic Monthly*, addressed to the—to them—unknown author of "The Luck of Roaring Camp." This the author opened, and found to be a request, upon the most flattering terms, for a story for the *Atlantic* similar to the "Luck."

Although this assertion is made on the authority of Harte himself, I venture to doubt whether the proposal of Field, Osgood & Co. followed so quickly the appearance of the story in the *Overland*. This letter written at least seven months later than the publication of the "Luck" is not quite consistent with the idea of such an early application.

ROOMS OF THE OVERLAND MONTHLY.
SAN FRANCISCO, April 23, 1869.

GENTLEMEN:

In regard to your proposal to examine a collection of my California Sketches with a view to republication, I fear that you have overestimated the number of my contributions to the *Overland*, wh. are (of stories) but two—"The Luck of Roaring Camp" and "The Outcasts of Poker Flat," the latter one in the Jany. no.

I am writing a little sketch similar in style for the June no. and have in view three or four more, when the pressure of my editorial duties shall be lifted either by the suspension of the Magazine or a division of its editorial work—which since the inception of the O. M. has fallen entirely on me. One or the other will happen about the 1st June.

I have one or two California sketches published before (but not in the *Overland*) and not included in the "Condensed Novels," but even these would not, together with the "Luck" and the "Outcasts" make a volume of the size suggested.

As my contract with Carleton of N. Y. expired with his first and only edition of the "Condensed Novels" (1500 copies) would it not be possible to translate one or two sketches from that?

Will you be good enough to tell me also what the *Atlantic* would pay for stories like these proposed.

Yours very truly,

FR. BRET HARTE

MESSRS. FIELDS, OSGOOD & Co.

BOSTON—

Still, it is possible that Harte waited for seven months before troubling himself to find out what price he would get for a story. He was charmingly careless about money matters.

We are told by his biographer that "one of the horrors of his existence was the omnipresent autograph hunter," and that in the closing days of his life, when asked by a young lady of the Pemberton household to whom he could not well say no, to sign his name in her "troublesome friend's still more troublesome birthday book," he complied, saying, "Tell that young woman I hate, loathe, and despise her." In his failing hours a letter came from a member of Mr. Roosevelt's family making a somewhat similar request. At the

moment, he condemned it, with the scores of such applications, to the wastepaper basket," and then he said, "No! that may be from a child. I 'll send my signature."

It may be a heinous offence, but to me the "poetry" of Whittier has always appeared to be of no high order of merit. He may have been a person of beautiful character, although he was guilty of atrocious injustice towards Daniel Webster in that famous poem called *Ichabod*. In his Abolition rage and fanaticism he did not scruple to proclaim a wretched libel upon a noble statesman; and while he was afterwards a little ashamed of his performance, he never had courage enough to say so publicly. A letter of his exhibits him as a truly disinterested patriot, who had "always voted the Republican ticket entire" regardless of principles or the qualifications of candidates, begging for a little political pap. It is not surprising to learn that in his younger days, when he was a member of the Massachusetts Legislature, he was a vigorous political plotter and had "large faith in his lobbying capacity."

NEWBURYPORT, 9th 11 mo 1876—BEN:¹ PERLEY POORE Esq.

MY DEAR FRIEND:—

I am very sorry I was not at home when thee called with thy English friend. I fully intended before this to have visited thee, but I have had company all the time & have often been too ill to leave home.

I am glad the election is over; and glad that the Democratic has ceased to be formidable. As I always have done I voted the Republican ticket entire but not without some fear that the overwhelming majority may be taken as endorsement of all abuses and errors. I like the speech of General Hawley. If his advice is taken all will be well.

My brother M. F. Whittier who is a clerk in the Boston C. H. fears that he may lose his place—one of the hardest and most respectable in the concern,—if rotation is decided upon. He is a staunch republican & has done good service with his pen by his letters of "Ethan Spike of Hornley." Of his faithfulness and ability in his place, Mr. Hamlin will vouch. Will it be asking too much of thee to speak to Gen. Wilson about him, & to request him to say a word to Judge Russell in his behalf? I should esteem it a great favor & if it is ever in my power will reciprocate it. Believe me very truly thy frd,

JOHN G. WHITTIER

¹It will be remembered that Mr. Poore affected the quaint conceit of putting the colon punctuation mark after Ben, and the newspapers and his friends were careful to respect the idiosyncrasy. Mr. Poore explained the usage on the ground that his Christian name was not Benjamin, but merely Ben. Even then, why the colon?

My brother has the general charge of the monthly returns to Washington, of the entire accounts of the Collector and Cashier. He has averaged six hours of hard labor per day and has been absent not above 2 days in a year. Mr. Slack of the Commonwealth and Dep. Coll. Fisk can give thee any information concerning him.

Like most high-minded partisans of his type, he makes his brother's party services the main basis for his retention in office, relegating the fraternal merits as a clerk—with his *six hours a day* of "hard labor"—to a postscript. His rejoicings over the fact that "the Democratic [sic] has ceased to be formidable" were a little premature, for the letter was penned only a few days after the date on which, as every one knows, Mr. Tilden received a majority of the electoral vote over Mr. Hayes; and as almost every one now concedes, Mr. Tilden was deprived of his office by rather disreputable devices, doubtless with the cordial approval of the poet whose brother's place in the Custom House was at stake.

Bayard Taylor was not a New Englander; he was not a professional Abolitionist; he was

not a reckless defamer of men who, in all sincerity and good faith, considered the peace of the whole country and the maintenance of its Constitution to be of paramount importance compared with the liberation of the negroes of the Southern States; but he was a noble figure in our literary history and honoured in public as well as in private life. There is more poetic fire in a line of the *Bedouin Love Song* than in all the placid volumes of the Quaker poet, and the broad field of his culture dwarfs into insignificance Whittier's little rocky patch. No one can fancy Taylor drivelling in the thin sentiment of "Maud Muller" or the pseudo-patriotism of "Barbara Frietchie." This letter to Professor Willard Fiske of Cornell University deals with the subject of political patronage, but affords a pleasant contrast with the letter of Whittier.

142 EAST 18TH ST. NEW YORK.

Feb. 23, 1878.

Confidential.

MY DEAR FISKE:

Boyesen has just been here, and brought me later news of you—the tide of congratulation has not yet

ceased. I have written somewhere about 125 acknowledgments since Sunday last—and still they come!

I have already had about 25 applications for Secretaryships, when I have none to give; the simple facts are these:—the present Administration reserves to itself the right to make all subordinate appointments; when Bancroft Davis resigned, the two places at Berlin were filled by the President, Sidney Everett (Edward E's son) getting the first rank;—so there is no vacancy, and if there were, I have not the sole power to fill it. Lowell, for instance, wanted young Henry James for his secretary; but the government appointed another man.

Now, between ourselves, I suspect that Everett (who is said to be in good circumstances, and who lives in England) simply wants the social prestige of the place. He has been *chargé d'Affaires* for seven months and will not relish being remanded to a lower position after I reach Berlin. Of course, this is only surmise on my part, but all I hear of Mr. E. makes it probable.

Should he resign, would *you* take the place? I have thought of you, in connection with it, from the very first,—and I cannot fix upon anybody else who is at once so competent and so welcome to me in all respects. I could not *make* the appointment, but I should do my best to have it made by the President, and I feel sure that it could be accomplished. In any case, I should know Mr. E's intentions in advance of anybody else, and thus get your name first before the appointing powers. The salary is \$2625.

I don't believe that Boyesen could, in any case, get



Bayard Taylor

the *First* Secretary's place; and the Second Secretary at Berlin is likely to stay on, since he loses nothing by my coming. I should prefer Boyesen to anybody *but you*; but, in case of a vacancy, I am sure you could be appointed, and if I should ask for Boyesen there would be the chance of having some unknown and perhaps incompetent man in his stead.

I am writing as if sure of my own confirmation—which is perhaps indiscreet. However, I only get good news from Washington. Evarts writes to me that it will not be delayed; but I can't go to Washington until afterwards. Please let me know, soon, how my proposal strikes you.

Ever faithfully,
BAYARD TAYLOR.

Another letter, to Osgood, has a more literary flavour.

KENNETT SQUARE, PENN'A.
Dec. 17, 1870.

Personal—

MY DEAR OSGOOD:

I left in such *hurry* on Thursday morning that I had no time to give you more than a very hasty assurance of my readiness to transfer to the new firm all the good-will and friendly interest which, for sixteen years past, I have felt for the old one. It is just twenty-four years since I have known Fields. He was the next after Griswold and Willis to speak a most welcome word for my first book, and I have never found any one since more frank, patient and appreciative (qualities not often combined!) than he. Hence

I shall miss him from his old place, until I get accustomed to the change; but you can understand this implies not the least lack of friendly confidence in his successors. Since the change must be made, I, for my part, could not wish a more satisfactory one. I do not believe in mutual interest without mutual esteem and trust; and I assure you now that I still look forward to the day when I shall be able to unite my separated books under one imprint, and that yours.

I think there are signs that the long darkness succeeding the war is about passing away, and literary interests—always the last to revive—will gradually improve. Our best age is yet to come, and I hope and believe that it will come while you and your associates can share in it. As an author, I wish, of course, to have an equal share!

Will you please order sent to me, by express, a handsome half-calf copy of *Faust*, instead of the two remaining copies. I want to give it to my wife on Christmas Eve, and am therefore anxious to get it in season.

Always truly yours,
BAYARD TAYLOR

Personal.

Kennett Square, Penna.

Dec. 17, 1870.

My dear Osgood:

I left in such ~~hurry~~ on Thursday morning that I had no time to give you more than a very hasty assurance of my readiness to transfer to the new firm all the good-will and friendly interest which, for sixteen years past, I have felt for the old one. It is just twenty-four years since I have known Fields. He was the next after Griswold and Willis to speak a most welcome word for my first book, and I have never found any one since more frank, patient and appreciative (qualities not often combined!) than he. Hence I shall miss him from his old place, until I get accustomed to

CHAPTER XIII

AMERICAN AUTHORS

Bancroft to Taylor—Holmes to Taylor—Holmes to Underwood
—Mark Twain to Taylor—Longfellow to Taylor—Lowell
to Taylor—Motley to Badeau—A Hawthorne letter—
Aldrich to George P. Morris—Artemus Ward—Noah Webster
—Charles G. Halpine—Chief Justice Chase.

MEN may often be judged by the letters that are written to them as well as by those they write themselves. The cordial estimation in which the big-hearted Bayard Taylor was held by his contemporaries in literature is abundantly shown in their letters to him, some of which I have been fortunate enough to acquire. I have quoted those of Tennyson and Christina Rossetti, and am tempted to add some Americans. There is one from George Bancroft. When we recall that the famous historian was in early life possessed of the delusion that he too was a

poet, it has a humorous suggestion. Bancroft's slim volume of awkward and boyish verse, if it may be dignified with that name, appeared in 1823 and was thereafter carefully suppressed, so that it has become a veritable "rarity." The Century Club in New York celebrated the seventieth birthday of Bryant on the night of November 1, 1864, and Bancroft presided over a notable gathering honoured by the presence of Emerson and of Holmes. Taylor's ode, sung to music composed by Louis Lang, then a well-known artist of New York, was "one of the features," as the reporters may have said. It had been submitted to Bancroft, and his proposed amendments may have been logical and proper enough, but one cannot help feeling that the real poet was better able to decide what was appropriate. For example, the idea of a change from the past tense to the present is more in the spirit of the historian than in that of the poet. This is what Bancroft wrote:

Saturday, 29 Oct. '64.

DEAR MR. TAYLOR—

Mr. Lang has just left with me your chant for

Bryant's 70th birthday. It is admirable; I expected good from you; & you have done exceedingly well. You need never regret that you made this most successful effort.

With your consent I propose to read stanza V and VI in the present tense; as Bryant still writes; "He sings of mountains"; "But hears a voice"; "which says"; & stanza VI—He sings of truth; He sings of right; He sings of freedom.

You are too modest. You poets are *never* of the past.

The VIIth stanza is probably clear to one familiar with Bryant's poem. If we print it I will in the margin quote one or two of the lines you refer to as Bryant's prophecy. I delight always in suggestions from my friends, claiming always a right to disregard them. May I make a suggestion, even if probably to find that the change had occurred to your own mind? & been rejected.

Stanza VII

God bid him live, till in her place

Truth crushed to earth *again shall rise*

The "mother of a mighty race"

Fulfil her poet's prophecies.

The former suggestion as to present tense in stanzas V & VI I feel sure about; this I doubt about; that is, I think *again shall rise* is better than *shall risen be*; but prophecies in the plural for the rhyme is no improvement on the singular "prophecy."

Again I say, that I am very much, indeed *very much* delighted with your chant, & shall not make the changes

of tense or in Stanza 7 without your special consent & desire.

Yours very truly,
GEO BANCROFT

No one knows or will know of these trifling suggestions. Let me hear from you by return mail.

Holmes writes in a characteristically genial and affectionate way. The dream may have been only a pleasant fiction, but the method of expressing kindly appreciation of a poem was surely a novel and a graceful one.

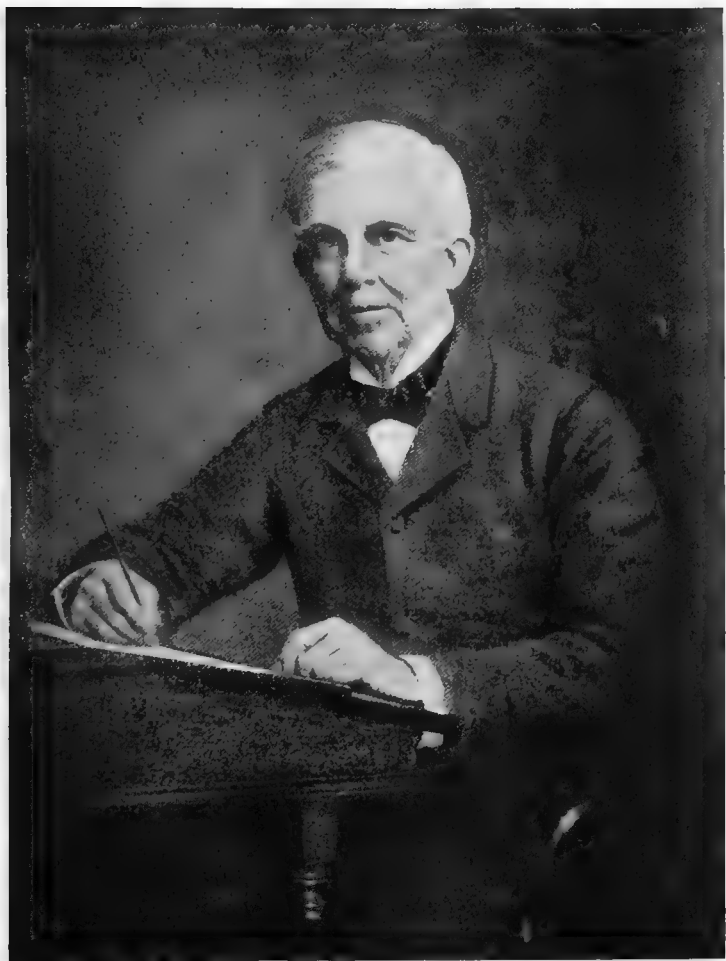
BOSTON, Sept. 1st, 1875.

MY DEAR TAYLOR,

I must tell you something very odd. Yesterday morning when I woke up I had been having an absurd dream. I was walking in Washington Street, when all at once you, Bayard Taylor, ampler in dimensions than your actual goodly personality, seized me and carried me as Gulliver might have carried a Lilliputian a few rods and then set me down, surprised, but unharmed and not feeling aggrieved by the familiar treatment to which I had been subjected.

The dream had hardly ceased vibrating in my memory when on coming down stairs I took my Daily Advertiser and there you were again, almost the first thing I laid my eyes on! Lo, I was taken up again by you and carried through your brilliant and lofty poem in the arms of your imagination.

Was my dream a premonition of the pleasure



Oliver Wendell Holmes

I had been terrified.

The dream had hardly ceased vibrating in my memory when on coming down stairs I took up my Daily Advertiser and there you were again, almost the first thing I laid my eyes on! So I was taken up again by you and carried through your brilliant and lofty power in the arms of your imagination.

Was my dream a premonition of the pleasure awaiting me? I have had pleasant waking hours with you but I do not remember ever dreaming about you before. The coincidence seemed to me too curious to pass unrecorded.

Always truly Yours
O. W. Holmes

awaiting me? I have had pleasant waking hours with you but I do not remember ever dreaming about you before. The coincidence seemed to me too curious to pass unnoticed.

Always truly yours,
O. W. HOLMES

Another letter of the Autocrat may be given here, although it is not to Taylor but to Francis H. Underwood, the assistant editor of the *Atlantic Monthly* during the first two years of its existence, and later the successor of Bret Harte as consul at Glasgow; he was a man of fine literary sense and critical skill, whose published writings, refined and scholarly, lacked the qualities which insure fame and popularity. The novel referred to in the letter was a story of Kentucky life, called *Lord of Himself*.

296 BEACON ST.
June 17th 1874.

MY DEAR MR. UNDERWOOD—

It seems so like old times to find you writing stories again that I felt fifteen years younger when I took up your book which you were so kind as to send me. I commonly thank my friends before reading their works,—once in a while after finishing them. But while I am in the midst of your story no less than

sixty manuscripts of twenty pages more or less each, students' examination books, are tumbled in upon me and must be immediately attended to. I cannot wait any longer without thanking you for your kindness in remembering me and assuring you of the interest with which I am following your characters through the incidents which you know so well how to manage, and in seeing through your eyes a manner of life of which I have only once had a brief glimpse with my own.

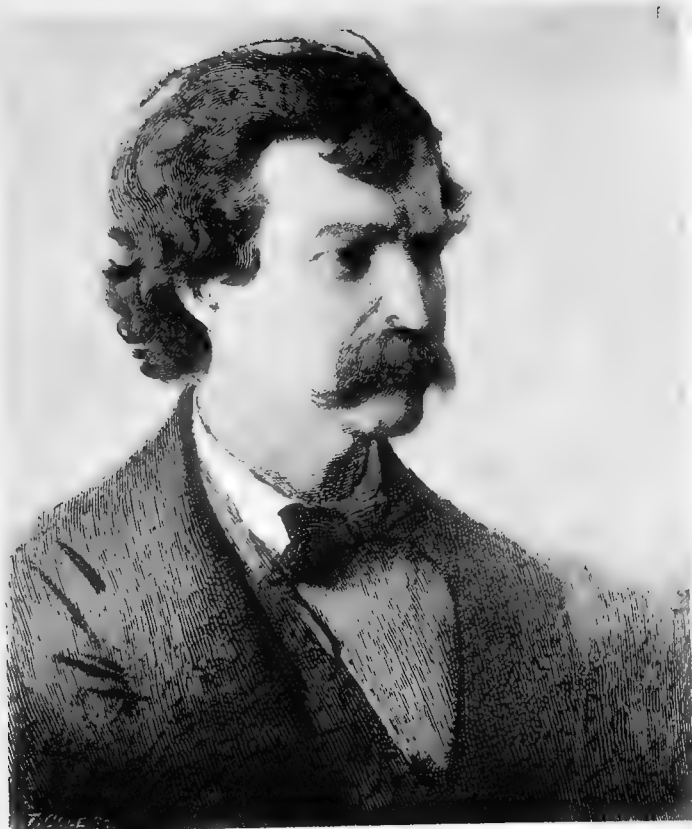
I cannot help flattering myself with the idea that I see how things are coming out, and I shall be very much disappointed if the right young man does not come by his own and get the right girl before I come to *Finis*. I think I can see that much of what you delineate is a genuine study from life—a strange life enough for us New Englanders to contemplate but as real as a New Hampshire farmer's.

I lay down your novel reluctantly to take up the first of this frightful heap of manuscripts and if when I take it up again I find you have treated any of my friends unfairly—of course the best thing you could do with poor old "Milly" was to send her to a better world—I shall call you to account. An author must remember that the children of his brain are real to other people, and treat them accordingly. I think I can trust you with your offspring but I must wait and see. With a thousand thanks and kind remembrances, I am

Faithfully yours—

O. W. HOLMES

Mark Twain's note to Taylor is not of much literary interest, but it has a Twainish



Mark Twain

Samuel Langhorne Clemens

From the engraving by T. Cole after the painting by A. H. Thayer

to Bayard Taylor.



142 N. York, Wednesday.

My Dear Mr. Taylor:

Good - we shall

look for you 31st. I think I
told you I was a son of father
to our young girls. Ask here
somed week to give them an
hour's talk, or read one
of your poems to them in my

house some time. They are
chopping laves of 16 to 20 yds.
old. They number something
over a dozen. ^{There are very many}
Fields, Warner, & I have talked
to them, & Howells & Handley have
promised. Can you stay over
& entertain them Saturday morn-
ing? Or Friday morning before
you go, so much time, if
you can't leave here till afternoon.
I hope you can & will. Yours, S. Clemens

ring and it affords a glimpse of one of his best traits, a fondness for young people and a disposition to contribute to their amusement and instruction.

HARTFORD, Wednesday—

MY DEAR MR. TAYLOR:

Good—we shall look for you 31st. I think I told you I was a sort of father to our Young Girls' Club here & asked you to give them an hour's talk, or read one of your poems to them in my house some time. They are charming lasses of 16 to 20 yrs. old. They number something over a dozen. Boyesen, Harte, Fields, Warner & I have talked to them & Howells and Hawley have promised. Can you stay over & entertain them Saturday morning? Or Friday morning if you can't spare so much time? N. Y. train does n't leave here till afternoon. I hope you can & will.

Yrs truly,
S. L. CLEMENS

When *Hiawatha* appeared, Taylor wrote to Longfellow and made what Higginson calls "the best single encomium on the book," saying, "the whole poem floats in an atmosphere of the American 'Indian summer.'" Longfellow's letter shows that he sent to Taylor advance sheets of *The Divine Tragedy*, which was not published until December 12,

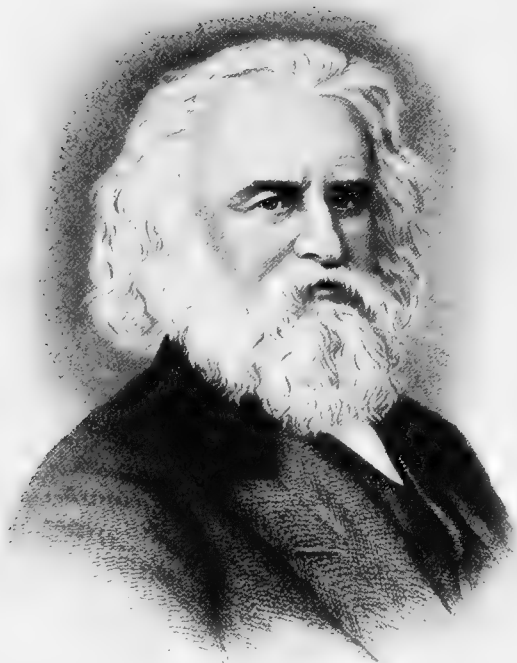
1871. The amiable Taylor may have expressed a "generous judgment" about it, but it was a dull and tedious performance, and the *Christus*, of which it constitutes the first part, and which appeared as a whole in 1872, was not a work on which rests the fame of its author; although we learn from his diary and from his biographies that he had been absorbed in it during many years and that it was his own favourite. It is worthy of notice that two personages as unlike as Longfellow and Jackson, the learned and scholarly professor and the rough and unlettered soldier, should have been troubled by the spelling of substantially the same word, for General Jackson writes "dificulty" and Longfellow "dificult."

Cambr. Nov. 23, 1871.

MY DEAR TAYLOR—

I have to-day received your letter of Sunday, and hasten to thank you for your generous judgment of my new book. It is, I assure you, extremely gratifying to me; and makes me feel that I have not wholly failed in treating a rather difficult [*sic*] subject.

By to-day's post I send you the Interludes and Finale, connecting and completing the whole work, presuming that Osgood told you something of my plan, and that this new book is only the First Part of a



Henry W. Longfellow.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow
From the engraving by S. Hollyer

Camble. Nov 23

1871.

My Dear Taylor,

I have to-day received your letter of Sunday, and hasten to thank you for your generous judgment, of my new book. It is, I assure you, extremely gratifying to me; and makes me feel, that I have not wholly failed in treating a rather difficult

"Ginle", which I send you
to-day. This will explain the
seeming want of proportion,
and balance, which you have
noted.

With kind remembrances
to your wife, who is always
most kindly remembered
by all of us.

Yours faithfully
Henry W. Longfellow

to Bayard Taylor

work, of which the Golden Legend and the New England Tragedies are the Second and Third; and which, when the three parts are published together, is to be entitled "Christus." This is a very old design of mine, formed before the Legend was written.

The "Introitas" belongs to the book as a whole; and its proper pendant or correlative is not the "Epilogue" of this first part, but the "Finale," which I send you to-day. This will explain the seeming want of proportion and balance which you have noted.

With kind remembrances to your wife, who is always most kindly remembered by all of us,

Yours faithfully,

HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

From Lowell's letter I am obliged to omit the Latin quotation because I cannot make it all out and I am not sufficiently familiar with Seneca to supply the illegible words. Lowell's handwriting had a fair appearance but, like Mirabeau's, was more pleasant to look upon than easy to decipher. The war to which he alludes was, of course, the Franco-Prussian.

ELMWOOD, 24th August, 1870.

MY DEAR TAYLOR—

The passage you ask about is from Seneca. . . . I should be very glad to refresh my very agreeable memories of Chester County & its kindly people

after an interval of (bless me!) a quarter of a century—but I fear it is quite out of the question at present. I think it would be an excellent thing for Mr. Hughes to do & shall advise him accordingly. How long he will stay with me or when he will come I know not. The newspapers always know more of our affairs than ourselves. I am glad to hear that your *Faust* is coming so soon. I doubt not it will do you & us honor. The next time you are so near, remember that it is always cool in my library. I allow no contemporary heats to enter there.

Always very truly yours,

J. R. LOWELL

Pray make my remembrances acceptable to Mrs Taylor, who must be feeling proud of her countrymen. But what an awful war!

When John Lothrop Motley wrote the following letter to Adam Badeau, he had just retired from the Austrian mission after a serious unpleasantness with the Johnson Administration, and General Grant was President elect. In all probability, after his disagreeable experience with the incoming Administration two years later, when he retired from the English mission, he would not have expressed himself so admiringly about Grant. Without discussing the rights and wrongs of his differences with his home government, we may be



J. Russell Lowell

James Russell Lowell

Elmwood, 24th August.
1870.

My dear Taylor,

The passage you ask
about is from Seneca (*Quæst. Nat. vii, 31.*)
& should read Eleusin servat quod ostend-
at veriscentibus. Eleusin is the more
common nomination.

I should be very glad to
refresh my very agreeable memories of
Chester County & its kindly people after
an interval of (bless me!) a quarter of
a century - but I fear it is quite
out of the question at present. I
think it would be an excellent thing
for Mr Hughes to do & shall advise
him accordingly. How long he will

stay with me or when he will come,
I know not. The newspapers always
know more of our affairs than ourselves.

I am glad to hear that your
faust is coming so soon. I doubt
not it will do you & us honor.

The next time you are so near,
remember that it is always cool in
my library. I allow no contemporary
heats to enter there.

always very truly yours
J. Russell

Pray make my remembrances
acceptable to Mr Taylor, who
must be feeling proud of his
countrymen. But what an awful
war!

permitted to doubt whether he was fitted to represent the United States at a foreign court during those uneasy times. Diplomatic positions were once regarded as eminently suited for literary men, possibly because authors were supposed to be unfit for any other kind of public office; and it may be that they are well enough adapted to the work when there is little to be done except to be graceful, scholarly, and courteous, to attend high social functions, and to say a few appropriate words at banquets. But they are apt to be sensitive and impracticable and in times of stress they are surely out of their element. Motley had a fine sense of superiority over the vulgarians who ruled at Washington but he did not possess enough tact or adaptability to conceal it; and moreover he seemed to lose his Americanism, which is a bad thing for an American minister to lose. One who is acquainted with his personal life and characteristics may well wonder that the favourable consideration of Mrs. General Grant should have flattered him so greatly; but then there may have been hopes of another foreign

mission, and a quarrel with Andrew Johnson was not a bad recommendation to Ulysses S. Grant. I am doubtful whether Mrs. Grant devoted much time to the perusal of the "Address" to the New York Historical Society, if he ever sent her a copy; and truth to tell, I do not blame her if she did not read it at all.

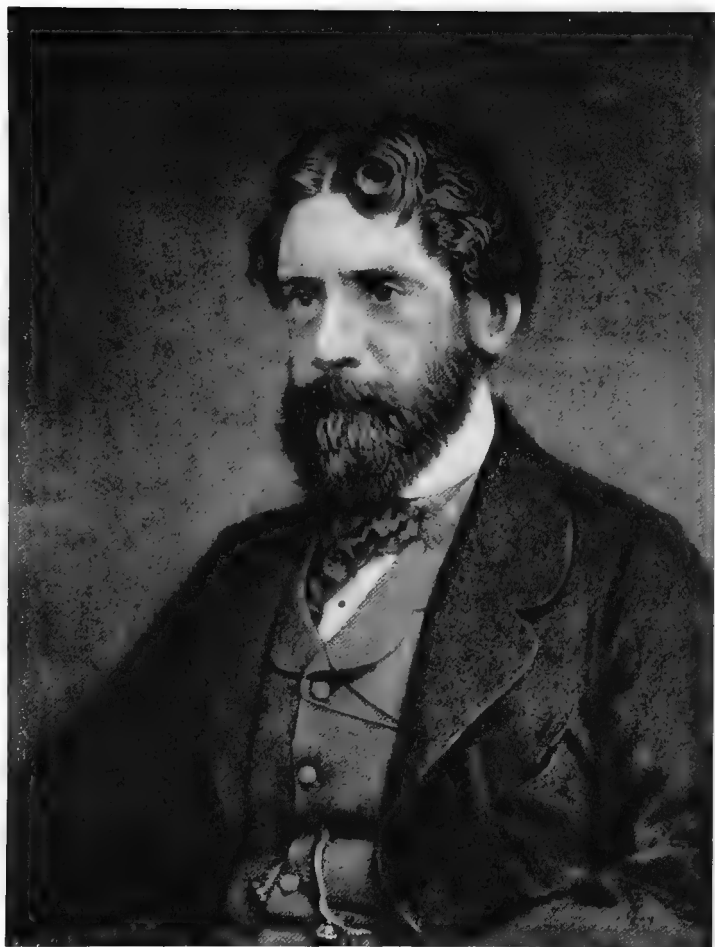
2 PARK STREET, BOSTON, 24 Dec. '68.

MY DEAR GENERAL BADEAU:—

Your kind note of 28 Nov. has remained unanswered until now, because I have been absent from home during the last twelve days. I had the privilege of making General Grant's acquaintance during his visit to Boston, of meeting him at dinner time & on other occasions, & I shall not permit myself to say more than to express the hope that he liked Boston only half as well as Boston was delighted with him. In that case we shall all be deeply gratified. Massachusetts is sometimes thought a cold place but I am sure he must have found it glowing towards him.

I had hoped to make a brief visit to Washington, after my engagements in New York were fulfilled but we have always kept Christmas faithfully in our family & as this is the first anniversary of it for a long time that I could be with them all, I am obliged to postpone my visit until about the middle of January & I have just written to Mr. Hooper to this effect.

I was very much flattered that Mrs. Grant honored me so much as to wish the letter which I recently wrote to you.



John Lothrop Motley

2 Park street
Boston
24 Dec / 68

My dear general Badeau

Your kind note of 28 Nov. has remained unanswered until now, because I have been absent from home during the last twelve days.

I had the privilege of making General Grant's acquaintance during his visit to Boston - of meeting him at dinner twice & on other occasions & I shall not permit myself to say more than to express the hope that he liked Boston only half as well as Boston was delighted with him. In that case we shall all be deeply gratified. Massachusetts is sometimes thought a cold place

As she is kind enough to take an interest in what I write or speak will you say that I shall ask leave to send her a copy of the Address which I made last week before the N. York Historical Society—so soon as it is published in pamphlet form. The report in the New York papers has many omissions—in some cases strangely perverting the sense.

Of course I shall have the honor of sending it to General Grant also—as well as to yourself. I think it will be ready early in January.

I hope that you are making steady progress with your History & that you will not be afraid of making it too long.

I really think that you ought to have two more volumes for the Military History—for your subject expands in interest & importance with every step in advance. But pray don't think me intrusive in offering advice on matters concerning which you are a far better judge than I can be. Wishing you a merry Christmas & happy new year & asking you to convey those sincere wishes to General & Mrs. Grant, I remain

Very sincerely yours,

J. L. MOTLEY

Brig Genl ADAM BADEAU, U. S. A.

Almost all who write of the personality of Hawthorne dwell upon his disposition to be solitary, and give the impression that he was averse to the society of his fellow-men; but while he was undeniably shy and self-

distrustful, he was not devoid of geniality and could be a most delightful companion. Like most men of delicate minds and a disposition to muse and to ponder, he did not enjoy miscellaneous company and the tedious banalities of what Donald Mitchell calls "pre-arranged social gatherings." In Julian Hawthorne's biography of his father a letter is quoted in which he says: "I do wish these blockheads, and all other blockheads in this world, could comprehend how inestimable are the quiet hours of a busy man—especially when that man has no native impulse to keep him busy—but is continually forced to battle with his own nature, which yearns for seclusion (the solitude of a mated two) and freedom to think and dream and feel." When in the company of those with whom he could shake off his natural diffidence and exaggerated modesty, he gave no indication of being a misanthropical recluse. Many men who have his strong aversion to bores have more skill in concealing it, and acquire a reputation for what is termed "sociability" because they are not frank enough to own how much they



Nathaniel Hawthorne
From a copper print

Leicester, December 10, 1850

My dear Sir:

I am glad that you think
me worth biographical passing; and as soon
as I get a book off my hands, I will
see what I can do towards your pur-
pose. You will not find it a life of
many incidents. I could wish (not for
the first time) that I were personally
known to you, and could impart the requi-
site materials from one corner of the
fire-side to the other.

Very truly Yours

Wm. Hawthorne.

I have never yet thanked you for
the Optumint. The book has been a great
pleasure to me, and is to still

are bored by that worthy, estimable but generally uninteresting person known as "the average man." One of my Hawthorne letters does not bear out the notion that he was invariably exclusive and inhospitable. He writes:

LENOX. December, 1850.

MY DEAR SIR:

I am gratified that you think me worth biographizing; and as soon as I get a book off my hands, I will see what I can do towards your purpose. You will not find it a life of many incidents. I could wish (not for the first time), that I were personally known to you, and could impart the requisite materials from one corner of the fireside to the other.

Very truly yours,

NATH. HAWTHORNE

I have never thanked you for the *Optimist*. The book has been a great pleasure to me, and is so still.

One of my letters of that charming man whose light and graceful poems endear him to all lovers of melodious verse but who surely deserves to be best remembered by the *Story of a Bad Boy*, was written to General George P. Morris of "Woodman Spare that Tree" celebrity, the friend and associate of Willis, editor of the *New York Mirror* and of

the *Home Journal*, the encourager of literary neophytes in the middle nineteenth century days. The year of its date is not given, but it must be quite an early letter, for Morris died in July, 1864, when Aldrich was not quite twenty-eight. So shadowy has become the fame of Morris, once a shining light in the little firmament of New York, that a year or two ago a pleasant writer, in describing the neighbourhood of Cold Spring, where the large-hearted editor had his home, "Undercliff," [within my recollection as well-known as "Idlewild" or "Sunnyside,"] spoke of the title of "General" as having been won by service in the Civil War, whereas it was only a militia title conferred in the time when military honours were achieved on the peaceful parade-ground or the busy stretches of Broadway.

Thursday Evening, July 26th.

TO GEN. GEO. P. MORRIS.

DEAR SIR—

I send you a trifle which you can use at your discretion and leisure, after you have disposed of rhymers more anxious than I to catch Fame and Time by the forelock. Speaking of time, it robs us of many



T.B. Aldrich

Thomas Bailey Aldrich
From a steel engraving

Thursday Evening July 26th

To Gen Geo P Morris.

Dear Sir,

I send you a trifle
which you can use at your discretion
and leisure, after you have disposed
of rhymes more anxious than I to
catch Fame and Time by the forelock.

Speaking of time, it robs us of
many a jewel; but—There is one thing
it shall not—take away from me—
the memory of the few pleasant moments
I passed with you a while since. I
feel the pressure of your hand in mine
yet: I think it will linger there

a jewel; but there is one thing it shall not take away from *me*—the memory of the few pleasant moments I passed with you a while since. I feel the pressure of your hand in mine yet; I think it will linger there always, the same as your songs have warmed my heart for many a year. May God bless you, sir.

Yours truly,

T. B. ALDRICH

Shortly before Charles Farrar Browne set off for England, where he gained so much celebrity but whence he was destined never to return, he seems to have abandoned temporarily his famous "show" with its respectable "snaix" and distinguished kangaroo—"an amoosin little cuss"—and to have become interested in some mining venture, a result possibly of his experience in the land of the Mormons. He writes:

Feby 4— '66.

DEAR H—

I saw Jim Wilder at Portland the other day, and he referred me to a party in Boston, who is in the mine business. Besides Wilder, who knows, says it is *getting* played out in N. Y. while Boston, on the contrary, presents a fresh unploughed field of green-horns anxious to be auriferously fleeced. He wrote the party (whose name I think is Graham—a lawyer) and will communicate with me at once. I shall be

in N. Y. before May 1st. I am anxiously waiting a reply to my last note to you.

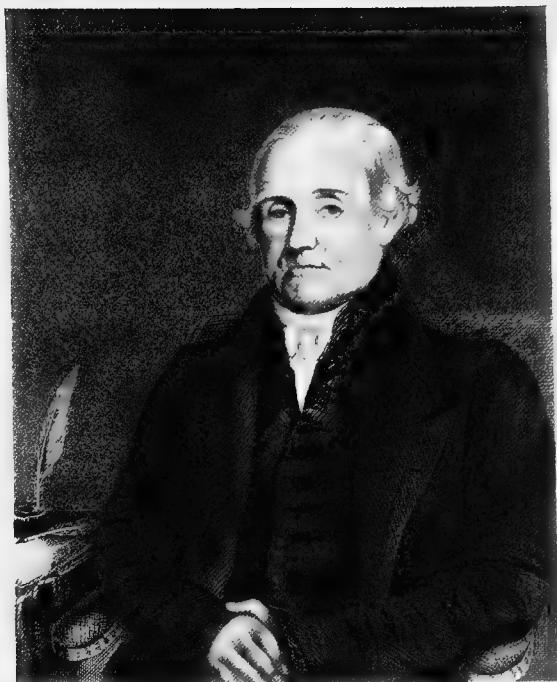
Yours ever,
A. WARD

Close by a little fragment of a note for the *Dictionary* reposes a letter written by Noah Webster in a bold and legible hand which gives no indication that the pen was guided by a man past eighty-four, only three months before the close of his life. The connection between "melasses," as he calls it, and the birth of a Dauphin is not quite apparent; he was evidently jotting down for a friend a few of his reminiscences.

NEW HAVEN, Feby 20, 1843—

SIR—

When I was traveling to the South in the year 1785, I called on General Washington at Mount Vernon. At dinner, the last course of dishes was a species of pan-cakes which were handed round to each guest, accompanied with a bowl of sugar & another of melasses for seasoning them, that each guest might suit himself. When the dish came to me, I pushed by me the bowl of melasses, observing to the gentlemen present that I had enough of *that* in my own country. The General burst out with a *loud laugh*, a thing very unusual with him; Ah, said he "there is nothing in that story about your eating melasses in New England." There was a gentleman from Mary-



Noah Webster.
ooooo

Noah Webster = Ancestor
From a steel engraving

NacKanon Feb 20 1843

6 in.

When I was traveling to the South in the year 1783, I called on General Washington at Mount Vernon. At dinner, the last course of dishes was a species of pan-cakes, which were handed round to each guest, accompanied with a bowl of sugar & another of molasses for seasoning them, that each guest might suit himself. When the dish came to me, I pushed by me the bowl of molasses, observing to the gentlemen present, that I had enough of that in my own country. The General burst out with a loud laugh, a thing very unusual with him; Ah, said he "There is nothing in that story about your eating molasses in New England." There was a gentleman from Maryland at the table, & the General immediately told a story, stating that during the revolution, a hogskew of molasses was ~~some~~ ^{stove} in West Chester by the over setting of a wagon, ^{the} "body of Maryland troops being near, the soldiers ran hastily & saved all they could by filling their hats or caps with molasses."

X~~X~~ Boston.

Near the close of the revolutionary war, I think in 1782, I was at West point when the birth of a dauphin in France was celebrated by the American troops at that place. The troops were arranged in a line along the hills on the west

land at the table, & the General immediately told a story, stating that during the revolution a hogshhead of melasses was stove in West Chester by the over-setting of a wagon, & a body of Maryland troops being near, the soldiers ran hastily & saved all they could by filling their hats or caps with melasses.

Near the close of the revolutionary war, I think in 1782, I was at West point when the birth of a dauphin in France was celebrated by the American troops at that place. The troops were arranged in a line along the hills on the west of the camp on the point & on the mountains on the east side of the Hudson. When the order was given to fire, there was a stream of firing all around the camp rapidly passing from one end of the line to the other, while the roar of cannon, reverberated from the hills, resounded among the mountains, & thousands of human voices made the atmosphere ring with a song prepared for the occasion, *A Dauphin's born*. This was a splendid exhibition, closed with a handsome repast under a long arcade or bower, formed with branches of trees. I have never seen any account of this celebration in print.

N. WEBSTER

One more letter may be given; not because of any great literary reputation of the writer, but because it shows the unbecoming itching for the Presidency of which Chief-Justice Chase was the victim and the petty and trifling methods he adopted to obtain a

nomination. Grant, who had never voted for any candidates not Democratic, was certain to be the Republican nominee, and Chase, who had been a Republican since that party was organised, had a hope of being put forward by the Democrats. As is not unusual, the matter of political principles was a minor one. Halpine was a hanger-on in newspaper offices, with a facile pen and no principles to speak of. He made a little fame during the rebellion as the author of some feebly humorous verse over the *nom de plume* of Miles O'Reilly; conducted a weekly newspaper in New York; and was a vain, rather showy, and wholly uninfluential person, who had a keen eye for the main chance. This character shines through the lines of this epistle; four months after it was written Halpine was found dead one day, and some weeks earlier the Chase "boom" had perished miserably.

REGISTER'S OFFICE, HALL OF RECORDS.

CITY AND COUNTY OF NEW YORK.

April 1, 1868.

MY DEAR CHIEF JUSTICE—

I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 26th instant, which has just

come to hand; and thank you very respectfully for the same. The points given in it shall be used to such advantage as I can put them, in your interest; but their source shall be kept as private as you wish—indeed, as they would have been without your warning of “strictly private” at the top. Let me say that, in conversation with Mayor Hoffman half an hour ago he expressed his conviction that the Dem^c and Conservative party “would have” to unite on Chase as their only hope of success”—and this from Hoffman is important; as he is only a tube through which more important organ-players whistle popular music. Certainly the *Herald* has not been unfriendly to you of late—I mean within the past fortnight; as I have written nearly all the articles in which your name occurred; and I further know Mr. Bennett wishes you to be pressed for the Presidency; but he is so fitfull and uncertain that I could not bind myself for his continuing steadfast to this or any other programme. Greeley, I know, for he told me so at dinner yesterday week, is deeply chagrined at the apparent necessity (“a ‘necessity of bad faith & cowardice” was my rejoinder) which makes Grant the Radical nominee; for I tell you frankly, and indeed have so said in my paper, that as between Chase for the Radicals and Pendleton for the Democrats,—there are 25000 Democrats in this City alone who would vote for Chase,—myself included—That Pendleton himself will be nominated, I do not think; but the contest will lie in our Convention between some equivalent for Pendleton—some man of his or similar antecedents & present platform—and the more loyal and moderate Conservatives who will

(I hope) press your name, or some name of your equivalent. To win, we must get back the old free-soil vote, represented by the *Evening Post*, (Wm. Cullen Bryant and Parke Godwin) in this City, and to win back that free-soil Democratic element, your name is certainly the most available we have offered. With kindest and most respectful remembrances to Mrs. Sprague & the Governor,

Believe me always to remain

Your obliged friend & servant,

CHAS G. HALPINE

Hon SALMON P. CHASE,
Chief Justice United States.

CHAPTER XIV

TWO NEW ENGLAND PHILOSOPHERS

Two New England Philosophers—Ralph Waldo Emerson—Henry D. Thoreau—Autographic "Finds"; Jay, the Fishmonger—Stock Stories—American Sources—Domestic Inroads—The American Antiquarian—My Sad Beginning—Dickens's Holocaust—Manuscripts—Autographed Books.

THE examples of Emerson and Thoreau in this particular collection are not very important or significant; such value as they possess is only autographic. They may serve however as texts for some remarks which may meet with vigorous dissent, although there is reason to believe that not a few agree with me; at least some have told me so in the strictest confidence. This is what Emerson writes—to George William Curtis, probably:

CONCORD, 2d Octr.

MY DEAR SIR—

Thursday 19th will suit us, &, I hope, the 17th is

good enough for Taunton. If not, if you must go to Taunton on 19th, then Tuesday, 17th, shall suit us, in the circumstances.

With all kind greetings,

R. W. EMERSON

MR. CURTIS.

There is nothing inspiring about that; no great thought is hinted at, no philosophical truth suggested; but it is Emerson, and that means much to the collector. There was a time when Ralph Waldo Emerson was the prophet and the seer of America. He had a powerful influence in the primitive days before we had emerged from the limitations of provincialism, but it has perceptibly diminished and he has become almost a tradition. He survives in a literary way, for he had an artfulness of style and discourse. He understood how to veil the expression of a thought in a delicate fabric which made the commonplace charmingly mysterious and he shrewdly refused to engage in argument with those who disagreed with him, a method not infrequently adopted by the wily who know that if you make assertions and heed

no objections you are fairly sure of getting some one to believe in you. It is significant that the man who, in 1838, announced that the office of preacher was dying and the church tottering to its fall has ceased to maintain his power, while the church which he contemptuously rejected has survived his repudiation and continues to be a living force.

It is always easier to say pleasant things than unpleasant ones. Those who insist upon the duty of "always telling the truth," meaning what they happen to regard as the truth, irrespective of their capacity to decide, are usually very disagreeable people. But Emerson could not justly complain of frankness in the expression of views, for he proclaimed that "we will walk on our own feet; we will work with our own hands; we will speak with our own minds." A critic once said of me that I was "never so sure and never so offensive as when I was wrong," meaning, of course, when *he* thought I was wrong. But if we hesitate to say what we really think for fear that some one will denounce us as being wrong, we will say very little. I do

not see why we should hide our true opinions, however unpopular they may be—that is, if we are not “running for office.” The man who has such perfect confidence in himself as to suppose that his judgments are final, is what Mr. Bumble said that, in certain contingencies, the law is; but these judgments may be good until reversed by competent authority. I do not feel that I am offensive when I say that to me, at least, there seems to be little sincerity in Emerson’s gospel; and nothing endures long in this world that is not sustained by sincerity. The lack of it is betrayed in strange ways which it is difficult to explain or to describe. We have all had the experience of listening to a vigorous and eloquent argument, commanding admiration, which yet failed to convince because we could not resist the feeling that brilliant as the speaker was, there was no sincerity behind what he was saying. It is easy to suggest that the fault may be in the hearer; but even so, the speaker is unsuccessful if he cannot correct that fault.

Let me plead Emerson’s behest about “speaking with our own minds” as some

justification for saying that a careful observer, not blinded by the disease of indiscriminating admiration, must be impressed, in considering his life, with the fact that like most apostles of individualism, he was disposed to depend upon other individuals and to get as much as he could from them for his personal benefit without exerting himself to any considerable extent outside of the fields of rhetoric. Emerson would have cut a sorry figure if he had practised literally and faithfully his gospel of absolute individualism. "Have no regard to the influence of your example, but act always from the simplest motives" is one of his precepts. If he meant what he said he was advising men to act in accordance with the principles of the hyena or of the wild men of Borneo, who care nothing for their example and who act from the simplest of motives. He recalls the sailor in *Ruddigore* who always acted according to the dictations of his heart, when it prompted him to do just as he wished to do. Another of his contributions to the stock of human wisdom is: "The great man is he who in

the midst of the crowd keeps with perfect sweetness the independence of solitude." This has a pretty sound, but are we to infer that the way to greatness is to shut one's eyes in a crowd and think of no one but self? At that rate, greatness is cheap. But possibly it was meant only as a phrase.

Mr. Ireland, in his *Biographical Sketch*, says of him, as if it were vastly creditable, that "it was a peculiarity in Emerson that the thing he most disliked was sickness, while disease he regarded with the strongest aversion." From this astounding revelation we are led to suppose that ordinary people are fond of sickness—by which Mr. Ireland doubtless means "illness"—and regard disease with positive affection. Many ardent self-lovers are sorely distressed at the sight of suffering because it annoys them, disturbs their contentment, interferes with their personal comfort. It may have been so in Emerson's case, for we must assume that Mr. Ireland is not ascribing to him any singularity in disliking his own sicknesses and being averse to his own diseases. This "peculiar"

antipathy to the contemplation of illness does not appear to have led him to *do* anything to help the sufferers. In effect, he proclaimed the duty of selfishness, the ultimate development of the creed of laziness; to that degree he was sincere. After the expulsion from Eden he would have used his "rich, baritone voice" and his subtle phrases in advising the stricken pair to gather fig-leaves at once, but he himself would have sedulously refrained from providing any, even for his own protection; he would have borrowed some from Adam. He seems to have been afflicted with a sort of constitutional indolence. In his younger days he was the pastor of a church, but he gave it up, ostensibly, because of a conscientious objection to the rite of the Lord's Supper; thereby ridding himself of an obligation to do systematic work and assigning a reason which permitted no argument. He might well have placed his abdication on the ground that he was not fit for pastoral labour; his heart was not in it. The dying Revolutionary veteran who, it is related, was so dissatisfied with the

“consolations” administered by the philosopher that he rose from his bed saying, “Young man, if you don’t know your business, you had better go home,” was an accurate observer. Emerson, by his own showing, entered the ministry without any serious conviction, although it may be unjust to surmise that the pecuniary consideration affected his action. One of his admirers applies to him the words used by Sir Leslie Stephen about himself, that “he did not discover that his creed was false, but that he had never really believed it.” In Sir Leslie’s case, however, the entrance into the ministry was largely due to the English customs of his day under which a studious youth, not well adapted to any other profession and engaged moreover in University work, took orders in the Church of England. Emerson studied theology for six years before he became assistant to Rev. Henry Ware in the Second Unitarian Church in Boston. To say that after all this preparation he became a minister without a sincere belief in the creed he professed to teach, is discreditable either to his

honesty or to his mental capacity. It shows a deficiency either in intellect or in moral sense, and there was no weakness of intellect. The circumstances of his awakening to his error are not without significance. Fortunately for him, he had done what many philosophers are wise enough to do—he married a wife, of whom it may be said that, like Mrs. Pecksniff, “she had a small property.” Upon her early demise, in February, 1832, he came into the enjoyment of about twelve hundred dollars a year, which meant much more then than it does now. It may have been merely a coincidence, but almost immediately he perceived the propriety and advisability of abandoning the ministerial function.

Philosophers are supposed to have a lofty contempt for such a sordid thing as property, but the matter of his pecuniary profit appears to have been perpetually before his mind. Pointing to the pride of his orchard, he said: “That apple tree is worth more than my head to me. My income from the former is greater than the revenue from all my books.” That is his reported speech but I own that

I am suspicious about its verity, for who, in a conversation, would use the expression "the former" in that way? At one time we find him dwelling, not altogether unostentatiously, upon his poverty, alleging that he had only a house, a garden, an orchard, twenty-two thousand dollars in cash investments, and an income of about eight hundred dollars a winter from his lectures. Under the conditions prevailing in New England three quarters of a century ago, he was rather well off. He had his start with property which some one else had toiled for and had accumulated for purposes not connected with Emerson's support.

But he was as content that others should have laboured for his profit as he was satisfied to have others do the fighting for him, when in 1861 he said, at the Charlestown Navy Yard: "Ah! sometimes gunpowder smells good!" That was the true philosophic spirit. He was several hundred miles away from the spot where gunpowder was burning and apparently gave no thought to the suffering and slaughter among those who were burning it.

His friends who were ready to break up the government of this country to destroy slavery had little help or comfort from him until their task was nearly accomplished and their cause had become popular in New England. "If I work honestly and steadily in my own garden, I am making protest against slave-labour," he said; but if the antagonists of slavery had limited their activities to that sort of "protest," slavery would exist to-day unless abolished by the voluntary act of the slaveholders. It was an easy, comfortable kind of protest, mild in its nature, and he must have been inefficient in his garden, even if honest and steady, since we learn that his digging was fraught with danger to his philosophic legs. His attitude towards real reforms reminds one of the coarse caricatures which not long ago filled our newspapers, labelled, "Let George do it." In his address on "The American Scholar" in 1837, he said: "If the single man plant himself indomitably upon his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him." It may be thought that this would depend a good deal

upon the nature of the instincts. The "huge world" does not trot about to suit the varying instincts of millions of mortals. Such pseudo-individualism means only savagery; experience teaches men that sane independence is best secured by intelligent co-operation.

In the *Century* for July, 1882, Emma Lazarus paid an elaborate tribute to Emerson, boasting that he founded no school, formulated no theory, and "abstained from uttering a single dogma." I do not know what she calls a "dogma"; I had an idea that, in its general sense, it meant "a fixed opinion," at least that is one of its principal meanings. Emerson was going about, writing and speaking, during all his active years, and it is dubious praise to say that he never uttered a fixed opinion. If that were true, what on earth was he talking about?

The letter of Thoreau is also devoid of any intrinsic interest. It was evidently written for the information of the head of the well-known publishing firm of Wiley & Putnam.

CONCORD, Jan 14, 1847.

DEAR SIR—

Will you please inform Mr. Wiley that I have concluded to wait a fortnight for his answer. As I should like to make some corrections in the Mss. in the meanwhile, I will thank you if you will send it to me by Harnden's express to Boston and by Adams' to Concord and I will return it in ten days.

Yrs &c.,

HENRY D. THOREAU

Whether or not the eccentric Mr. Henry D. Thoreau may be regarded as a philosopher, in a technical sense, he fancied that he was one, and he was a devout disciple of the Sage of Concord. His views of life and of his duties in life were full of the spirit of his master. "Local as a woodchuck," according to John Burroughs, he had a literary faculty charming to many, but he too was something of a *poseur* and understood the art of self-advertisement almost as well as a modern "Progressive" statesman. In the words of Lowell, he was "a man with so high a conceit of himself that he accepted without questioning, and insisted on our accepting, his defects and weaknesses of character as virtues and

powers peculiar to himself." He posed as an enthusiastic lover and observer of nature; but, as Lowell further points out, he was really no observer.

Till he built his Walden shanty he did not know that the hickory grew in Concord. Till he went to Maine, he had never seen phosphorescent wood, a phenomenon early familiar to most country boys. At forty, he speaks of the seeding of the pine as a new discovery, though one should have thought that its gold-dust of blowing pollen might have earlier drawn his eye. . . . He discovered nothing. He thought everything a discovery of his own, from moonlight to the planting of acorns and nuts by squirrels.¹

Burroughs, in his glowing eulogy of him, feels obliged to make this admission:

Considering that Thoreau spent half of each day for upwards of twenty years in the open air, bent upon spying out Nature's ways and doings, it is remarkable that he made so few real observations. . . . He has added no new line or touch to the portrait of bird or beast that I can recall—no important or significant fact to their lives.

Burroughs easily discerns the reason: he had no self-forgetfulness; he was thinking more about Henry D. Thoreau than about

¹ *My Study Window* (1871), 200.

anything else; if he looked into the glass of Nature, he could see only—himself. He was a monument of egotism. Having neither purpose nor persistency, he regarded, or affected to regard, all success as contemptible.

His hermit-life at Walden has been one of his principal "properties," as a stage-manager might say; but a slight investigation discloses how much imposture there was about it. The gentle but commonplace Donald Mitchell, amiably but conventionally flattering to all writers dealt with in his *American Lands and Letters*, expresses the general idea when he says of Thoreau at Walden that "he built his own house under the pines, measuring costs by pennies." What he really did was to avail himself largely of the property of others in orthodox philosophical style. He began characteristically by "borrowing Alcott's axe." He took possession of land belonging to Emerson. He procured planks by "dismantling a shanty" which he bought from an Irishman—that, at least, he paid for. It is true that he performed the work of constructing the cabin,

having no other occupation and being bent on possessing a retreat where he would be under no necessity of doing anything for the benefit of any one else; but he had the help of friends, including Alcott and George William Curtis, in "raising" it. He was only an amateur hermit, for Channing tells us that "he bivouacked there and really lived at home, where he went every day," the "home" being that of his father. Mr. William Morton Payne, in his entertaining book, *Leading American Essayists*, while quoting these words of Channing, thinks that they were not literally true, because, I infer, the "hermit" did not go home *every* day. But it is plain that the "cabin" was much like the "desert island" we boys used to contrive, back of the homestead, or a picnic place of resort of the kind much favoured in these times by busy men who seek to escape for a brief season the daily cares of life. I wish I knew whether he ever returned Alcott's axe.

For several years he was an inmate of Emerson's house, paying for his support, as well as I can make out, by "playing with the

kittens" or teaching Emerson to dig without imperilling his lower limbs; and Emerson submitted to it meekly, possibly because he was incapable of the effort involved in getting rid of his non-paying boarder. In 1848, Thoreau, at the age of thirty-one, went back to the house of his father, the worthy maker of lead-pencils, "and remained under the family roof for the rest of his life."

Thoreau explains the motive of his "hermit" masquerade by saying:

I wanted to live deep and suck out all the marrow of life, to live so sturdily and Spartan-like as to put to rout all that was not life, to cut a broad swath and shave close, to drive life into a corner and reduce it to its lowest terms, and, if it proved to be mean, why then to get the whole and genuine meanness of it, and publish its meanness to the world; or if it were sublime, to know it by experience, and be able to give a true account of it in my next excursion.

He was going to do all this by hiding in a toy-hermitage quite near Boston and then writing about—himself. It seems to the ordinary mind to have a nauseous flavour of absurd self-sufficiency; to learn "life" by disregarding the existence of one's fellow-beings, to evade

the responsibilities of life, and then to proclaim a decision on the whole great subject as if it were final and conclusive. To ignore our brother-men, to refuse obedience to law, and to defy the rules of decent society may be characteristic of the unwhipped schoolboy, who usually outgrows such childish diseases by the time he assumes the toga of manhood.

Lowell, in *My Study Windows*, sums up the Walden matter when he says:

Thoreau's experiment actually presupposes all that complicated civilisation which is theoretically abjured. He squatted on another man's land; he borrows an axe; his boards, his nails, his bricks, his mortar, his books, his lamp, his fishhooks, his plough, his hoe, all turn State's evidence against him as an accomplice in the sin of that artificial civilisation which rendered it possible that such a person as Henry D. Thoreau should exist at all.

Burroughs thinks that Thoreau "had humour, but it had worked a little; it was not quite sweet." A humour that is sour must be a very bad humour; but Burroughs has about as much humour as one of his own woodchucks, and is not a competent judge. Lowell says that "Thoreau had no humour," and

most of us will regard him as better qualified to pass judgment. No great egotist, absorbed in self-admiration, ever has any sense of humour, for if he had he would not take himself so seriously.

But why should an elderly and inoffensive autograph collector (not a king but only a commoner too) scold and rail about Emerson and Thoreau? They live only in their books, and the books cannot be changed; their little personal foibles and peculiarities lie buried with them. No matter what I may say or think of them, some man will be fond of them, another will dislike them, and the great majority will not think of them at all.

There is comfort in the fancy that, while there are few undiscovered corners of the globe to gladden the hearts of geographic explorers, there may be mines of autographic treasure still hidden and awaiting the approach of the enthusiast. In spite of the ravages of war and of revolutions and the losses occasioned by ignorance and inattention, there must be stores of long-forgotten letters and

manuscripts which will ultimately be brought to light. The knowledge of the pecuniary value of old writings has been so widely diffused by the aid of the newspapers and the activities of the dealers that the possessors of these hoards are more likely to overestimate than to depreciate their worth in the market. Dr. Scott, in his rather dry and colourless way, tells of many surprising "finds," such as the discovery of the diary of Rev. Dr. Campbell, recording his visits to Dr. Johnson and forming an interesting addition to Boswell's *Life*, which was "behind an old press in one of the offices of the Supreme Court of New South Wales" in Sydney; but there is no known explanation of the mystery of its appearance in that strange hiding-place. Mr. Edward Jenks, writing from Melbourne University, informs us how "in that distant quarter of the world he had turned up no less a treasure than a manuscript book of Keats, containing several of his poems and his 'Pot of Basil' with a new verse." But we must remember that in early days Australia was largely populated

by exiles from England who had a shrewd idea of the value of what Mr. Wemmick called "portable property," without much inclination to disclose the fact of its possession by them or the sources from which it was derived.

Then there is the story of Sir Robert Cotton who found his tailor cutting off, for a measure, a strip of parchment which proved to be one of the originals of Magna Charta with the seals and signatures intact; of Dr. Raffles, who bought for one and sixpence, in an old bookstore on Holborn Hill, the account of the expenses of the execution of Mary, Queen of Scots, with an order for their payment signed by Cecil, Lord Burleigh, and who procured from the files of a printer at Wrexham, North Wales, the original draft of Heber's "From Greenland's icy mountains"; and of the man who some seventy years ago found Mr. Jay, a fishmonger in Hungerford Market, selling soles wrapped in an old folio sheet, which led to the discovery of seven tons of records—bought by Jay at Somerset House for £7 a ton—consisting in part, it is said, of documents for the safe-keeping of prisoners

in the Tower from the time of Henry VII to that of William III, autograph accounts of Nell Gwynne, receipts signed by Wren, Dryden, and Sir Isaac Newton, with autograph letters of Cardinal Wolsey to Pope Clement VII about the divorce of Henry VIII, a manuscript in the hand of Edward VI, and a letter of Queen Elizabeth.

Some of these wonderful histories may not however be accepted absolutely in all their details. Personally, I feel some doubts about those "autograph accounts" of Nell Gwynne, since Nell, with all her charms, did not shine in the matter of chirography, being barely able to make her mark when signing a paper; still they were accounts in somebody's autograph, and one must not be hypercritical. Another little touch added to the Jay narrative is not reassuring. We are told by Scott that "a fire having occurred, it destroyed about three tons which Mr. Jay still had unsold." We might suppose that when the "fire" destroyed that lot, it "occurred," but it is odd that in so many of the romantic instances of alleged wholesale "finds," we are always

pained by learning that a certain specific amount of matter has been disposed of by some such method of destruction. And how came a fishmonger to buy £49 worth of old documents merely to use as wrapping paper? When did this injudicious fire occur? If before the revelation, how did it happen that there was so much material left? If after, when its value was known, how did these records come to be lingering in the perilous precincts of Hungerford Market? If there were "three tons still unsold," there must have been a good deal that had been "sold" and not utilised for the wrapping up of soles. One feels disposed to regard with some suspicion the spectacle of the fishmonger engaged in wrapping merchandise in folio sheets "which he tore out of a large volume he kept by his side." Could it have been a skilfully devised "plant"? A little cross-examination might be useful in these circumstances.

A mysterious association between fish and old autographs must exist, as we learn of the appearance of the forty years' correspondence between James Boswell and the Rev. W. J.

Temple, in the possession of the proprietor of a fish shop in Boulogne.

After all, most of the accounts of "finds" are stock stories, repeated again and again in English books about autographs, such as the discovery of the Fairfax papers in a box apparently filled with paving tiles; the Thurloe papers, revealed by the accidental falling of a ceiling in Lincoln's Inn; the finding by M. Vatel of the love letters of Mme. Roland and Buzot, in a shop in a Parisian suburban market; the Wedgwood records, in an old store in Birmingham; Lady Mary Wortley Montagu's letters in a box in a lawyer's office; the manuscripts of Cardinal York, offered for sale in Rome for £20; and Sir H. Maxwell Lyle's exploration of a loft at Belvoir—all of these are duly set forth in the pages of Scott and of Broadley. Doubtless there are many dealers who could, if they would, thrilling tales unfold, but for obvious reasons they are not inclined to unfold them. It would not be good "business" to encourage in prospective buyers a feeling of rosy hope that new autographic

El Dorados are to be opened by a mere amateur.

Naturally the opportunities for wholesale discoveries of autographic deposits in this quarter of the world are not so abundant as they are in the older countries. Most of us know the tale of Mr. Tefft and the paper blown about the lawn, and I have told elsewhere the story of the barrel of Benjamin Franklin writings rescued some years ago by a lady visitor at a house near Philadelphia. There may be a few storehouses undisturbed in the Southern States, which have survived the destruction caused by the Civil War, but even those will probably be of no serious importance.

No one knows, of course [says a recent writer¹], how many precious documents bearing the signature of Washington, Lee, or Henry were used to light the fires, or "stop a hole to keep the wind away." It is a fact that a good Virginia housekeeper kept the mould out of her preserves with covers cut from George Mason's letters. At a time and a place where paper was scarce, we can imagine how great a temptation it was to ransack the garret for needed scraps. . . . We are sorry that preserves were so much liked in old

¹ *The True Patrick Henry*, p. 286.

Virginia, and we are glad to have certain letters that corroding time has left us.

Forty years ago and more there was in New York a little quarterly publication called *The American Antiquarian*, conducted by Mr. Burns, which had a short and precarious existence. A few of the old numbers were given to me lately by a generous friend in Buffalo, and they have a genuine if pathetic interest. In the first article of the first number (May, 1870) there is a brief chapter on autographs in which the writer laments over the destruction of "thousands of tons of valuable matter," and says:

Much has been asserted, and more conjectured, as to the historical matter destroyed in the South by the license of soldiers, but those who have had even a glimpse of the piles of manuscript, the accumulations of centuries, drawn from garrets by the high prices paid for old paper at the North during the war, are prone to believe that more of value was turned into the hoppers of paper-mills than exists to-day in all the public and private collections of both North and South. In any event the period of the late war may be considered as an era in the vandalism of MSS., and the gap made by it can never be refilled. . . . There may be much valuable matter still in the hands of

those who appropriated it at the South and are indisposed to exhibit their booty, but as yet little has publicly appeared from that source.

We read of the Harrison papers at Chantilly, Virginia, which were thrown in bulk from the garret to make room for a hospital, and of the burning of many of them by ignorant soldiers. But the sacrifice of autographic material has not been confined to the South. Dr. Parsons found the remains of the Pepperell papers rotting in an outhouse and the purchaser of Johnson Hall, at Johnstown, N. Y., discovered many of those of Sir William Johnson in like condition.

One feature of the *American Antiquarian* is the list of prices prevailing at the time, and it is disheartening to the long-suffering collector of the present. We observe, for example, a war letter (L. S.) of Washington for \$10; a fine folio of Benjamin Franklin for \$15; a three-page quarto letter of Joseph Hewes (July, 1776!) for \$25 (a Hewes letter is rated now at \$100); a three-page letter of Dickens to G. P. R. James for \$3;—but to prolong the catalogue would be too painful.

Returning to the destruction of autographs, I have a sad and vivid recollection of the fate of my first autographic possession. It was a written order of General E. Kirby Smith, C. S. A., brought home by my father when he returned in 1863 from the Cumberland Gap campaign. I had an undefined impression at the time that it had been wrested by my sire from the Rebel warrior in personal combat. Later I added to it a letter of General John A. Dix, which elevated my solitary specimen to the dignity of a collection. In due course they were offered up by a dear old feminine devotee of the preserve jar and the gingerbread pan, upon the domestic altar; a proceeding which suspended my collecting mania for about a quarter of a century.

One of the most heartrending tragedies recorded in modern history is the burning by Charles Dickens of all his accumulated letters and papers of twenty years when he resumed his residence at Gad's Hill in 1860. The unpardonable act was performed in an open field, where, the criminal perpetrator of the

outrage says, "they sent up a smoke like the genie when he got out of the casket on the seashore; and as it was an exquisite day when I began, and rained heavily when I finished, I suspect my correspondence of having overcast the face of the heavens." Strangely enough, he seems not to have noticed the obvious fact that heaven was weeping over the wanton sacrifice. "This," says Mr. Kitton, in *Dickens in Pen and Pencil*, "is probably the most valuable bonfire on record as regards the nature of its constituents; it is difficult to conceive what sum could be obtained at the present time by the disposal of such an extensive collection of autographs, which must have had a remarkable literary value as well as a pecuniary one." Dickens justified himself on the ground that he was "daily seeing improper uses made of confidential letters, on addressing them to a public audience that has no business with them." But there must have been a very infinitesimal part of the correspondence so deadly as all that, and the danger was negligible. Dickens's own letters about his separation from his

wife, which he himself "addressed to a public audience that had no business with them," were far more unfit for the public than any of those which he destroyed could possibly have been; and it would have been no great task to protect the sanctity of the burned letters so long as such protection was needed. An indignant writer in the *Antiquarian* utters a plaintive wail over the holocaust, which is too diffuse for quotation. By some freak of fate, the manuscripts of Dickens's books have been unusually well preserved, most of them having been given to John Forster, who left them as a legacy to the South Kensington Museum. The manuscript of *Our Mutual Friend* became the property of G. W. Childs, and was by him bequeathed to the Drexel Institute in Philadelphia, although the South Kensington authorities offered £1200 for it; the *Christmas Carol*, given to Thomas Mitton, went to America for a price of £2000; and the manuscript of *The Haunted Man* in some way disappeared.

When we think of the enormous values placed upon the manuscripts of distinguished

authors, we cannot escape a feeling of despair over the destruction of so many. I have never forgiven Moore, Murray, and Hobhouse for burning the manuscript of Byron's autobiography in 1824, even if Mr. Broadley does whisper that a duplicate is supposed to exist; but he adds tantalisingly that its present whereabouts is unknown. It was a crime, whether we regard it from a literary, a biographical, or an autographic point of view. Many manuscripts suffer the fate of *Rab* about which the good Doctor Brown of Edinburgh wrote: "I am quite sorry that I cannot give you the manuscript of 'Rab.' Only three days ago I found it in my desk and threw it into the waste-basket, and by this time it is in ashes and up the chimney." After the printer has finished with them, they are apt to be consigned to the rubbish heap, unless the writer is peculiarly conscious of his merits, or some admiring friend—like John Forster—cherishes them fondly, or some publisher has an unusual appreciation of them. Now that the lordly typographical artist disdains to look at anything in the pen

and ink way, we have fallen into that destitute state when we actually buy typewritten monstrosities which are vaunted in the catalogues as having "numerous corrections by the author," a sorry substitute for the old-fashioned manuscript. Of a somewhat similar nature are "authors' corrected proof sheets," which are not entitled to a place in an autograph collection. I have some myself. Yet it is not so long since real manuscripts were as cheap as an A. L. S. of a modern novelist. In 1831 the MS. of *Ivanhoe* brought £12, that of *The Abbot* £14, and that of *Kenilworth* £18; while in 1889 one page of *The Abbot* was sold in London for £17.

The autographed book—by which I mean a book which once belonged to a man of renown and in which he wrote his name, not a book with a letter pasted in it—has a greater charm, for it blends the autographic element with that of personal association. The collecting of such books is only a by-product of autograph collecting, but I am disposed to believe that the average man, not a collector, feels more interest in such a book than

he does in a simple letter. We are all conscious of an attraction about the book which speaks to us of the former owner in a peculiarly pleasant way. I am fond of my copy of *The Vicar of Wakefield* with "Nathaniel Hawthorne, Salem, Mass." on the flyleaf, "Nath. Hawthorne, Bow. Coll. Maine" on the title, and divers little notes on the blank pages, including these lines, which show that like most young men in their college days, or later for that matter, Hawthorne was not unmindful of "the eternal feminine":

When lovely woman stoops to folly
And finds too late that men betray
What—

But there he either forgot the rest of the quotation or turned his mind to some other subject. There is tender association too in the copy of Poe's Poems dedicated to Mrs. Browning, in which is written: "Given to Mrs. Benzon—partly on account of the poetry, partly on that of the dedication at page 33—with all affectionate wishes of Robert Browning, March 7, 1867." We look with curiosity

on the old Hebrew Grammar (1721) with the inscription on the title-page, "Thomas Carlyle, 1828"; on Hayley's *Life of Milton*, with "Gulielmus Cowper, Gulielmus Hayley, 1796" on the flyleaf and "Wm. Cowper" on the second title, with Cowper's bookplate; on the Elzevir Sallust, with "J. Swift" on the title; and on the copy of *The Pleasures of Hope and other Poems*, with an inscription by Thomas Campbell: "To his Sister, Mary Campbell, from the author. It is almost unnecessary to say with what cordial affection the giver presents this token of esteem." I wish that I could have more confidence in the large-paper copy of a poem by Ambrose Phillips with the signatures of "A. Pope" and "H. Walpole." It seems almost "too good to be true," and while I make no accusations against it, I am aware that the reproduction of such well-known autograph signatures on a page of an old book is not beyond the skill of a very ordinary forger, and the enthusiast who invests good money in such a purchase must suffer at times from melancholy scepticism unless he obtains for his

precious volume a fairly well authenticated pedigree.

The grave and serious collector who overcomes his natural reserve sufficiently to write about his hobby is much given to dwelling on the value of autographs as historical memorials and upon their educational importance, anxious to justify to the world his fondness for the objects of his fancy. I fear that I have not treated the theme with proper dignity, and have exhibited a tendency to under-statement. Bellenden Ker said of Lord Brougham after he was gone, "There is always a foundation of truth in his statements, but he was such a terrible exaggerator." "No, no," was Lyndhurst's comment, "I do not admit that. I consider that the worst exaggerator is the person who under-states." There may be some truth in Lyndhurst's remark, but in our times there is not much disposition towards that sort of exaggeration. I have not been consciously guilty of it, but I have not felt inclined to imitate a political campaign chairman and "claim everything"

for the collector; I am content merely to ask for him a moderate share of the respect which the world gives to those who devote themselves to worthy and innocuous pursuits.

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